ADHESION WARFARE:
US ARMY COMBAT FORCES FACE AN ENEMY WHO IS CAPABLE OF NEGATING THEIR DOCTRINAL STAND-OFF FIREPOWER ADVANTAGE IN AFGHANISTAN, WITH DEADLY CONSEQUENCES

A thesis presented to the Faculty of the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree

MASTER OF MILITARY ART AND SCIENCE
General Studies

by

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Fort Leavenworth, Kansas
2008

REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE

Form Approved
OMB No. 0704-0188

1. REPORT DATE *(DD-MM-YYYY)*	**2. REPORT TYPE**	**3. DATES COVERED** *(From - To)*
12-12-2008	Master's Thesis	FEB 2008 – DEC 2008

4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE
ADHESION WARFARE: US ARMY COMBAT FORCES FACE AN ENEMY WHO IS CAPABLE OF NEGATING THEIR DOCTRINAL STAND-OFF FIREPOWER ADVANTAGE IN AFGHANISTAN, WITH DEADLY CONSEQUENCES

5a. CONTRACT NUMBER

5b. GRANT NUMBER

5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER

6. AUTHOR(S)
MAJ DIRK D. RINGGENBERG

5d. PROJECT NUMBER

5e. TASK NUMBER

5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER

7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)
U.S. Army Command and General Staff College
ATTN: ATZL-SWD-GD
Fort Leavenworth, KS 66027-2301

8. PERFORMING ORG REPORT NUMBER

9. SPONSORING / MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)

10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)

11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)

12. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY STATEMENT
Approved for Public Release; Distribution is Unlimited

13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES

14. ABSTRACT

Beginning in the Korea War, through Vietnam and continuing with the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan, US forces have been involved in combat typified by close, sharp actions - often without the doctrinally prescribed firepower to support the maneuver forces. US Operations in the rugged mountains of Afghanistan, in particular, dramatically demonstrate how an adept enemy, the Taliban, place themselves in very "close proximity" to friendly forces and civilian population as a result, they are able to negate the US firepower advantage thus removing the ability of US forces to use lethal fires from aircraft and artillery for fear of friendly or collateral damage. The lack of developed road networks and low US troop numbers prevented US forces from massing quickly in large numbers and lead to a reliance on stand-off based firepower to support the maneuver forces. The indications point to a coordinated effort by enemy forces utilizing past performances of US enemies as a basis for their tactical evolution. Though not new to warfare, these *adhesion warfare* tactics present a significant problem for US ground forces that must increasingly rely on maneuver to defeat our enemies in the localized, direct action combat involved in counter-insurgency and low-level military action.

15. SUBJECT TERMS
Close Combat, Taliban, Hugging, Adhesion Warfare, US Army, Afghanistan, Tactics

16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:			**17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT**	**18. NUMBER OF PAGES**	**19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON**
a. REPORT	**b. ABSTRACT**	**c. THIS PAGE**			**19b. PHONE NUMBER** *(include area code)*
(U)	(U)	(U)	(U)	101	

Standard Form 298 (Rev. 8-98)
Prescribed by ANSI Std. Z39.18

MASTER OF MILITARY ART AND SCIENCE
THESIS APPROVAL PAGE

Name of Candidate: MAJ DIRK D. RINGGENBERG

Thesis Title: ADHESION WARFARE: US ARMY COMBAT FORCES FACE AN ENEMY WHO IS CAPABLE OF NEGATING THEIR DOCTRINAL STAND-OFF FIREPOWER ADVANTAGE IN AFGHANISTAN, WITH DEADLY CONSEQUENCES.

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The opinions and conclusions expressed herein are those of the student author and do not necessarily represent the views of the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College or any other governmental agency. (References to this study should include the foregoing statement.)

ABSTRACT

Adhesion Warfare: US Army combat forces face an enemy who is capable of negating their doctrinal stand-off firepower advantage in Afghanistan, with deadly consequences by MAJ Dirk D. Ringgenberg, 101 pages.

Beginning in the Korea War, through Vietnam and continuing with the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan, US forces have been involved in combat typified by close, sharp actions - often without the doctrinally prescribed firepower to support the maneuver forces. US Operations in the rugged mountains of Afghanistan, in particular, dramatically demonstrate how an adept enemy, the Taliban, place themselves in very "close proximity" to friendly forces and civilian population and as a result, they are able to negate the US firepower advantage, thus removing the ability of US forces to use lethal fires from aircraft and artillery for fear of friendly or collateral damage. The lack of developed road networks and low US troop numbers prevented US forces from massing quickly in large numbers and led to a reliance on stand-off based firepower to support the maneuver forces. The indications point to a coordinated effort by enemy forces utilizing past performances of US enemies as a basis for their tactical evolution. Though not new to warfare, these *adhesion warfare* tactics present a significant problem for US ground forces that must increasingly rely on maneuver to defeat our enemies in the localized, direct action combat involved in counter-insurgency and low-level military action.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I want to thank Mr. George Stephenson, Dr. Tim Hentschel and Mr. Bud Meador for their tireless efforts in analysis, review and general conversation with me during this process. Throughout the year, Mr. Stephenson's iron will motivated me to remain focused and Dr. Hentschel's worthy pen reminded me what proper written English looked like. I would also like to thank my wife, Michelle, for the lost weekends, late nights correcting my spelling and putting up with everything. To my son Hunter, who valiantly tried to erase my thesis one afternoon in early October 2008. In attempting any undertaking of this magnitude, it is always those who assist who make the difference. I am indebted to all for the wonderful, professional and candid support. I dedicate this work to the *Infantryman* who, as of this writing, is huddled in the cold mud somewhere in the mountains of Afghanistan, fighting a determined foe in close combat in the same spirit as his forefathers did at places like the Marne, Luzon, Chosin and Hill 875.

All the Way!

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ACRONYMS

ANA	Afghan National Army
ANP	Afghan National Police
AQ	Al Qaeda
CALL	Center for Army Lessons Learned
CCF	Chinese Communist Forces
COA	Course of action
COIN	Counter Insurgency
COP	Combat outpost
FM	Field Manual
FOB	Forward operating base
GWOT	Global War on Terrorism
GDP	Graduate Degree Programs
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NVA	North Vietnamese Army
SGA	Small Group Advisor
SME	Subject Matter Expert
TTP	Tactics, Techniques and Procedures
USACF	United States Army Combat Forces
VC	Viet Cong

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

> A good battle plan that you act on today can be better than a perfect one tomorrow.
>
> Gen George S. Patton

The Problem Statement

The purpose of this effort is to investigate and, hopefully, suggest responses to what appears as an emerging battlefield tactic used successfully against US Army combat forces:

> The author uses *US Army combat forces (USACF)* as a non doctrinal definition describing the US Army units, predominately infantry, inside the brigade combat team (BCT) down to the platoon which are conducting combat operations in Afghanistan. Additional units, like military police, artillery and engineers are included, but normally operate in conjunction with infantry units in Afghanistan.

Current operations in Afghanistan often involve combat typified by close, sharp actions in mountainous terrain or small remote villages. These operations range in size from platoon to battalion and are designed to fix the enemy in order to bring US firepower consisting of aerial bombardment or artillery to effect; followed by maneuver to complete the destruction of enemy forces. However, more often than not, these operations become violent clashes that have USACF facing increasingly larger enemy units without the doctrinally based traditional advantage of our firepower. This advantage of firepower has become the hallmark of US war fighting. Additionally, the doctrinally based advantage of firepower is being severely limited by Taliban tactical actions – actions that indicate the US faces a future where our traditional firepower supremacy is threatened.

Thesis

The war in Afghanistan indicates the enemy is very adept in negating our firepower advantage by using a tactic variously named “hugging” or “staying in close” or similar descriptors. This study will demonstrate that in Afghanistan, the enemy’s use is more deliberate and sophisticated than a mere impromptu or battlefield expedient – clearly the enemy has worked to perfect this tactic of *adhesion warfare:*

> The author uses *adhesion warfare* to describe this tactic throughout this study. It is a non-doctrinal term to adequately and succinctly express the actions and efforts of the enemy to gain a tactical advantage against US forces by negating our firepower advantage in close combat by gaining and staying in close proximity to US forces and or the civilian population.

Adhesion warfare not only has potential tactical significance but affects our operational concept and design. A clear understanding and counter to this tactic seems to be missing in current US combat practices. However, past conflicts involving similar tactics used against US forces demonstrate many potential solutions, but change will require a shift in the current thinking. Until a sufficient counter-measure is adopted, US forces face an enemy in Afghanistan, and to a lesser degree in Iraq, whose methods may be a harbinger for future conflicts.

This thesis is organized into three main areas of research: US Army doctrine and manning practices for the GWOT; current US operational practices in Afghanistan and to a lesser degree Iraq; and comparing enemy tactics from the Korean War to present actions in the GWOT. In determining a possible US response to these enemy actions several options will be considered. While changes at the strategic level such as the current rules of engagement and national objectives are certainly important in any

discussion, this review limits consideration to the operational level and tactical level forces.

This review also focuses on firepower used in support of maneuver forces and does not involve the very real concern of "close proximity" to civilian population as a tactic employed by the enemy. Essentially – the ability for an enemy force to *adhere* to a US formation creates a myriad of problems outside of the immediate situation. Considerations in operational level responses include training and manning levels including doctrine revision. Tactical level considerations include a review of weapon system employment, firepower distribution, technology usage and tactical approaches. The lessons and tactics, techniques and procedures (TTP) often resemble fighting methods more closely related to 20th Century tactical operational problems encountered – certainly not what an advanced military would expect to encounter as we move into the 21st Century.

Primary Research Question

Does US Army operational level employment and tactical training of combat forces adequately prepare those forces to defeat an enemy who is capable of negating the US doctrinal stand off based firepower advantage?

Secondary Research Questions

This study will follow the development of the current Global War on Terrorism thru ground combat involving US forces primarily in Afghanistan. The secondary research question will attempt to identify what possible changes could the US Army take to effect a positive change in tactical operations, if needed. What can US Army combat

forces do to defeat the enemy's ability to *adhere* to USACF – basically "counter adhesion" pro actions.

The supporting questions will assist in answering both primary and secondary questions with regard to addressing the problem and identifying a solution, if one exists. Supporting questions are:

1. How were US soldiers killed in combat, currently in Afghanistan and in past conflicts in Korea and Vietnam?
2. What were Afghan Mujahideen tactics, learned by the Taliban, developed to defeat the Soviet Union?

Assumptions

The United States will remain in a state of war against international terrorism for many years to come. Many generations of soldiers will mature in the ranks with several years of combat experience from tours in Iraq and Afghanistan. The current set for deploying 12 months will resume by FY 09, however the current 12 months between combat tours will not increase for three to five years. No major strategic changes will occur for the next three to five years and the enemy will continue to make armed struggle the primary means of prosecuting the war. The US will continue to have the technical and material advantage in air delivered and cannon artillery.

Limitations

The scope of this study will revolve primarily around the written doctrine and training for close combat operations. Any emerging TTPs that are not in doctrine, but may prove very useful to the units in theater may be included to emphasize a

countermeasure. I will use examples from Afghanistan and Iraq, but do not intend to address any overarching political outcome for the conflict. Any observance on strategic practices will be made with direct correlation to a tactical problem. I do not intend to examine the causes for involvement in any conflict, only analyze the tactical innovations and practices of combatants, both US and those designated as enemies of the US. In Afghanistan the Taliban use civilian shields, hostages and protected sites to "negate" US standoff based firepower, and though they are timely and important issues, these specific tactics fall outside the scope of this study.

Delimitations

The focus will be on the US Army doctrine and historical actions primarily within the Afghanistan Theater of Operation. The concentration will focus on the brigade combat team (BCT) down to platoon, with limited reference to coalition forces in Afghanistan, but only to draw tactical conclusions. Support and Stability, Information or Humanitarian Relief Operations will not be discussed unless involving combat actions. No references to combat actions beyond the Korean conflict will be included.

Significance

The nature of modern warfare remains a struggle between opposing forces attempting to "out-maneuver" their opponents in order to impose their "will." The "will" of our enemies clearly shows they are deadly, determined and clever. Our experience clearly shows this will continue to intensify and produce battlefield casualties. As we struggle to prosecute the Global War on Terrorism within Iraq and Afghanistan, US forces must factor in many differing points of view on the proper methods of defeating

the enemy. The sensitive nature of fighting, played nightly on television, places US forces under intense scrutiny about how combat operations are conducted. The very nature of our desire for a collateral damage free war seems to contradict our doctrine on combined arms maneuver warfare and use of our doctrinal standoff based firepower, which inherently produces collateral damage. The US Army must fully appreciate that the Global War on Terrorism will not be over anytime soon, therefore doctrine must address the current enemy ability to *adhere* to US forces and develop doctrine to counter this enemy ability. Operational and tactical innovations must be implemented to provide the USACF leaders the tools to successfully defeat the enemy and accomplish their assigned missions.

CHAPTER 2

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY and LITERATURE REVIEW

Research Methodology

The research methodology in this thesis relies upon published works, personal interviews, government manuals and documents, newspaper articles, editorial commentary articles and the author's personal experience. This study is designed to take a look at past US Army battles and draw conclusions in respect to enemy actions the US Army currently faces in Afghanistan. This research analysis will determine if a correlation exists in the tactical execution of combat by past and present enemies of the US and to what extend those tactics are affecting US Army combat operations.

The bulk of research was conducted through review of published literature on the nature of combat in Afghanistan, both present and during the Afghan – Soviet War from 1979 until 1989. In reviewing the limited material on Soviet Army operations, a distinct similarity between current US and Soviet tactical experience was found. The limited number of US Army troops resulted in those troops in combat characteristically identical to what Soviet forces faced in Afghanistan – especially during the later stages of the war. This study does not compare Soviet Army behavior to that of the US Army. It does, however, seek to point out the serious challenges faced at the operational and tactical level of combat against the Taliban.

By limiting the scope to operational and tactical analysis in Afghanistan and training prior to US forces entering Afghanistan, the research seeks to determine if limited resources and/or doctrinal shortcomings are detracting from US Army success. The focus on past battles and lessons learned, followed by doctrinal review, current

published material and interviews is used to draw comparisons to how the US Army dealt with similar situations in the past. Although one would expect to find a bulk of material after seven years of combat in Afghanistan, this research effort discovered only limited Afghan-specific training manuals, most in the form of US Army Center for Lessons Learned (CALL) pamphlets. The CALL pamphlets provide "filler material" in the place of official doctrine or field manuals (FM), of which, there are none on Afghanistan specifically. The CALL material did provide an insight into the practical execution of combat operations based on a specific unit's experience.

After reviewing the available material and conducting interviews, a pattern in the doctrinal absence of Afghan material was discovered. By reviewing the available literature from both periodicals and books, the research focused on determining if any other research was suggesting the existence of operational and tactical difficulties for the US Army arising from Afghanistan. Demonstrating the historical significance through the examples provided by previous battles demonstrated that the current operational and tactical setting as one that was not uncommon to US Army history. Numerous examples existed to document this argument and analysis.

While researching past US Army battles, the assumption that most operational and tactical lessons learned would have direct correlation to those currently in Afghanistan proved correct. The research into operational level analysis was directed at doctrinal employment and organizational design of US Army forces in Afghanistan through reviewing US field manuals (FM) specifically referencing the US Army brigade combat team (BCT) as the primary operational unit in Afghanistan. The information available on the BCT was limited, but enough existed to allow analysis on the problems

this organization faced as a result of the extreme terrain and limited number of US forces in Afghanistan. Research into the Soviet – Afghan War and US Army operations in Vietnam and Korea provided clear evidence that the *adhesion warfare* tactics were successfully used against the both the US and Soviet Union at the tactical level.

The analysis focused on drawing correlations between previous US combat experience and that in Afghanistan against the Taliban, while determining how the doctrine and training was addressing, or incorporating, known combat lessons into preparation of US Army forces. The lack of a clear understanding of the combat capabilities of enemy forces –Taliban as well as those from the past – are understated and not present in most written sources. The compiling of material and resources for this thesis sought to demonstrate, in part, a failure to recognize the problem facing US combat forces in Afghanistan through a study of this failure in previous US battles and wars. The evidence is presented in that manner.

Literature Review

The literature utilized in this research is divided into three categories: core material of greatest value, background material focused on creating a common reference and personal account contributions related to the thesis topic. Each subject area evaluated for relevance to the thesis, ease of use and correlation to other published works, if any. Currently, the bulk of writing on the subject of US Army tactical level training and employment for the Global War on Terrorism is limited to several individual books describing small unit actions. A definite gulf exists between detailed US Army histories in Afghanistan in comparison with Iraq. The latter is clearly dominant.

The lack of an official US Army history involving the past seven years of conflict in Afghanistan places increased reliance on individual works that may contain limited background, scope and bias. All effort was made to mitigate bias and present various views on the information researched. The core material is pre-Global War on Terrorism offers the most unbiased viewpoint.

Material of Greatest Value

Without question, the most relevant work used in this thesis was Les Grau's works, *The Bear went over the Mountain: Soviet Combat Tactics in Afghanistan,* and *The Other Side of the Mountain: Mujahideen Tactics in the Soviet-Afghan War.* They were the primary source material in reviewing what type of combat occurered in Afghansitan proir to the US Army. Additionally, Andrew Birtle's *U.S. Army Counterinsurgency and Contingency Operations Doctrine 1942-1976* described with great clarity the US Army legacy in preparing and fighting counterinsurgency wars which helped form the basis for the thesis question. Robert Doughty's Combat Studies Institute Leavenworth paper on *The Evolution of US Army Tactical Doctrine, 1946-76* led to a review of doctrine during the post Vietman War period. It helped further define the scope of the thesis question and raised the issue of a doctrinal problem existing within the US Army. In reviewing the US Army doctrinal changes, Anne Chapman, Carol Lilly, John Romjue and Susan Canedy presented a outstanding overview in *Prepare the Army for War; A Historical Overview of the Army Training and Doctrine Command, 1973-1998.* The model of change depicted inthis book helped identlfy how the US Army would deploy into combat in Afghanistan.

Comprehending the overall situation in Afghanistan, both past and present, Steven Coll's *Ghost Wars: The Secret History of the CIA, Afghanistan, and Bin Laden, from the Soviet Invasion to September 10, 2001,* and Ahmed Rashid's works, *Taliban: Militant Islam, Oil and Fundamentalism in Central Asia* and *Decent into Chaos* serve as the defining literature on why Afghanistan is difficult to understand for outsiders. Both books present the Afghan situation with great clarity and insight. The works specifically addressing challenges the US faced were John Frketic's thesis, *Soviet Actions in Afghanistan and Initiative at the Tactical Level: Are there Implications for the U.S. Army* and Gregory Heritage's *Tactical Methods for Combatting Insurgencies: Are U.S. Army Light Infantry Battalions Prepared.* Both CGSS Masters theses illuminate the challenges of light infantry maneuver warfare at the tactical level.

As the research focused on tactical level training and combat, John. H. Poole, *TheTiger's Way; A U.S. Private's Best Chance for Survival* presented a detailed account of Asiatic fighting styles, while Dr. Robert F. Baumann, *Russian-Soviet Unconventional Wars in the Causcasus, Central Asia, and Afghanistan* and Scott R. McMichael, *A Historical Perspective of Light Infantry* provided a detailed tactical level account of combat tactics. The article by Robert Scales, "Infantry and National Priorities" provided additional valuable insight on current training and doctrine problems within the US Army. The need to identify and defeat the enemy at the tactical level is dramatically depicted in this report. All sources provided key insights into one or more aspects of US Army operations, training and employment doctrine. As the research focused on examining more specific information several sources provided detailed, but limited,

insight to help validate an assumption. The following material played a critical role in providing a missing piece of information sought in this research.

Background Material and Personal Accounts

Stephen S. Tanner's book, *Afghanistan; A Military History from Alexander the Great to the Fall of the Taliban*, Seth G. Jones, *Counterinsurgency in Afghanistan* and Hy S. Rothstein, *Afghanistan and the Troubled Future of Unconventional Warfare* each provided a unique insight into either the history of Afghainstan, counterinsurgency specifics or unconventional warfare. This information helped shape the thesis question in relation to how US forces understood the past battles fought in Afghanistan.

In developing a background related to training US Army forces, Adam B. Lowther's book, *Americans and Asymmetric Conflict: Lebanon, Somalia and Afghanistan* and Loren B. Thompson's, *Low-Intensity Conflct: The Pattern of Warfare in the Modern World* presented a valuable overall review of where US doctrine intersected with unconventional warfare. While researching additional US Army doctrine, Major Paul H. Herbert's Leavenworth Paper, *Deciding What Has to be Done: General William E. DePuy and the 1976 Edition of FM 100-5, Operations* provided the insight into concrete doctrine changes related to the US Army troubles in Vietnam.

In terms of soldier combat performance Dave Grossman's, *On Killing; The Psychological Cost of Learning to Kill in War and Society* and, to a lesser degree, S.L.A. Marshall's, *Men Against Fire: The Problem of Battle Command in Future War* presented a detailed overview of past problems and solutions the US Army sought in training and conducting combat operations. The individual soldier and junior leader accounts in Roy E. Appleman's, *East of Chosin*, David H. Hackworth's, *About Face: The Odyssey of an*

American Warrior, Kenneth E. Hamburger's, *Leadership in the Crucible: The Korean War Battles of Twin Tunnels & Chipyoung-Ni,* Bryan Perret's, *Impossible Victories: Ten Unlikely Battlefield Successes* and the US Department of the Army publication, *Seven Firefights in Vietnam* all proved invaluable in providing insight into close combat against enemy forces in Korea and Vietnam. The parallels between these conflicts and Afghantan proved inescapable.

While personal interviews and numerous other publications, contributed to answering either direct or indirectly questions relating to this thesis, it was the previously listed material which consisted of the most relavent sources in answering the thesis question. Ultimately, all material used was insightful and valuable in the conduct of research.

CHAPTER 3

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The Current Situation in Afghanistan

The US Army is in the seventh year of combat operations inside Afghanistan. During this time, US Army combat forces (USACF) have conducted operations primarily in southern and eastern Afghanistan until the transition in the southern areas to a predominately NATO force in mid 2006. After the transition, the USACF, comprised of two Infantry Brigade Combat Teams with an array of support personnel, focused efforts on the eastern portion of Afghanistan along the Pakistan border. The terrain in the US area of operation (AO), referred to as Regional Command East, ranges along the Pakistan - Afghan border from Hindu Kush Mountains in the north to the river valleys of Paktika province in the south. USACF, operating from numerous combat outposts (COP) and forward operating bases (FOB), conduct combat operations aimed at bolstering the legitimacy of the Afghan government and eliminating Taliban influence.

The US area of operation, in eastern Afghanistan (bordering Pakistan) historically contains tribal sympathies aligned with the predominately Pashtu community. The Taliban are dominated by Pashtu tribesmen. Pashtu tribal allegiances, lack of modern infrastructure in the form of roads and proximity to the Pakistan border enable the Taliban to maintain a threatening presence throughout eastern Afghanistan. Recent combat in eastern Afghanistan demonstrates that Taliban forces remain strong and lethal despite almost seven years of combat to defeat them. US forces are continually attacked during patrols and in their combat outposts and forward operating bases by large numbers of Taliban fighters who have the ability to appear without warning. Current strategic

assessments regard the situation as perilous and indicate the Taliban are growing militarily stronger. There are a number of reasons for this assessment but suffice to mention the "sanctuary" afforded to the Taliban Pashtu, combined with improved leadership and weaponry, are two leading factors.

Despite rapid advances in intelligence gathering, detection and targeting systems, USACF continually face tactical surprise and frequently lack the ability to decisively defeat the Taliban in close combat. Although decidedly "low-tech" in their approach to war, the Taliban retain the initiative in most firefights by "hugging" or adhering to USACF, and thereby negating the doctrinal US standoff based firepower advantage. This execution of *adhesion warfare* by the Taliban is resulting in increased US battlefield casualties with no immediate counter- measure available to USACF. To fully appreciate the developmental "road" to our current situation it is helpful to review past experiences in confronting enemy who conducted combat in a similar fashion with similar results. Additionally, the following paragraphs will outline the doctrinal dilemma we now face. It has a long history.

The War in Korea (1950-1954)

In October 1950, the US 8th Cavalry Regiment, part of the 1st Cavalry Division, occupied a hasty defensive position around the North Korean town of Unsan. As part of the US Eighth Army advance, the 8th Cavalry formed the left flank of the Republic of Korea (ROK) 15th Division. The lead units were engaged in a fierce fight with retreating North Korean forces resulting from the Inchon amphibious landing and subsequent advance north of United Nations forces.[1] As night fell on 1 November 1950, US forces observed a large amount of smoke covering the battlefield to the north. Unknown to

them, a large Chinese Communist Force (CCF) was using the smoke to mask their movement towards the US front line.

As the ROK 15th Division continued to battle North Korean forces, the CCF launched a massive attack into the flank of the 15th Divisions. The ROK division disintegrated, creating a large gap between them and the US 8th Cavalry Regiment. As darkness fell, the CCF surreptitiously and deliberately closed the gap and fell upon the unsuspecting US forces. The CCF counter-attack was a large scale division level operation designed to defeat in detail. The commander of the 8th Cavalry Regiment, Major John Millikin Jr., immediately tried to reinforce the threatened sector. CCF units, who had remained camouflaged during the day, suddenly launched a general attack against the entire US position. The sudden presence of CCF soldiers attacking from numerous directions forced Major Millikin to shrink his perimeter and request reinforcements from higher headquarters. Throughout the night, US forces fought desperately in hand-to-hand combat against the CCF. All reports indicated that CCF units were only spotted within 300 yards of US positions – the 8th Cavalry was taken completely by surprise.[2]

As daylight broke on 2 November, 8th Cavalry units realized the CCF had managed to infiltrate behind their positions and throughout the front line. As combat continued, air and artillery firepower could not be employed due to the smoke and close proximity the CCF units maintained against the US forces. The 8th Cavalry lost the ability to maneuver. As the battle raged, several relief attempts were halted by well placed CCF ambushes along the few roads leading north to Unsan. By nightfall on 2 November, Major General Gay, Commanding General, 1st Cavalry Division reluctantly

ordered a withdrawal.[3] The 8th Cavalry, still engaged with CCF at close range, tried to disengage, but quickly disintegrated in the face of sustained contact.

Over the following two days, CCF maintained a tight hold on the US forces resulting in a complete destruction of the 8th Cavalry. The lack of artillery and aircraft firepower support significantly eroded the US infantry's will to resist in the face of a determined and well trained enemy. CCF forces summarized their first major encounter with US forces in the following excerpt from a CCF training pamphlet:

> Cut off from the rear, they (the Americans) abandon all their heavy weapons…Their infantrymen are weak, afraid to die, and have no courage to attack or defend, they depend always on their planes, tanks and artillery….4

What makes the battle of Unsan more remarkable was that the CCF only employed mortars and virtually no artillery, tanks or attack aircraft. For the duration of the war, similar CCF tactics would continually deprive the US forces from employing massed firepower and resulted in continued high US casualties.

One of the highest losses of life by US forces during the Korean War occurred at the Chosin Reservoir in December 1950. Driving deep into North Korea, Marines and elements of the 7th Infantry Division were caught in a CCF attack in the area of the Chosin Reservoir at the end on November 1950. The Marines were on the western side of the large reservoir and the Army forces, comprised of one regiment, were on the eastern side. The CCF managed to close the distance to both forces totally undetected and attack on the night of 27 November 1950. The soldiers of the 7th Infantry Division, 31st Regimental Combat Team occupied positions along the edge of the reservoir spread along a three mile stretch of the only road running north in the area. That first night the

soldiers fought desperately against the CCF onslaught. Afterwards, M Company Commander, Captain Earle Jordon, described the battle:

> The first night it seemed to me to be just a continuing battle at very close range, sometimes hand to hand, grenades used in large numbers by the Chinese, until dawn, when the enemy withdrew."[5]

The CCF used night attacks, pulling back during the daylight in an effort to avoid US aircraft firepower brought in at first light. By second day and with mounting casualties, the 31 Regimental Combat Team, now renamed Task Force Faith (after Lieutenant Colonel Don Faith – the only remaining battalion commander in the regiment), began to retreat. Sensing the loss of cohesion in US forces, the CCF maintained constant and close contact, even during the daylight. Because of CCF use of *adhesion warfare* tactics, US aircraft were able to offer minimal assistance. In one attempt, US aircraft errantly dropped bombs that hit Task Force Faith, in addition to the CCF, inflicting heavy casualties.

Continuous attacks by the CCF upon Task Force Faith climaxed on the fourth day, resulting in the total disintegration of remaining resistance and loss of unit cohesion. Constant pressure by CCF at very close proximity prevented any maneuver by Task Force Faith infantry and the remaining US artillery from performing its doctrinal role. Overrun during the initial attack, the recaptured artillery was reduced to firing at point blank range for the remainder of the battle. However, several small groups of US soldiers were able to exfiltrate south and re-enter friendly lines.

The seven day period from 21 November to 3 December 1950 marked one of the most intense periods of fighting during the entire war. The combined Marine and US Army forces suffered horrendous casualties during the retreat from the Chosin Reservoir,

reaching 2,000 killed and 5,000 wounded. The most remarkable aspect of the battle is that the CCF inflicted the casualties almost exclusively at close range with individual small arms weapons. CCF did employ limited artillery and a few tanks, but by the admission of US officers after the battle, they seemed to have played only a minor part in the defeat of USACF and Marines.[6] The CCF achieved an operational victory and forced the US to withdraw from the eastern part of North Korea.

After the Korean War, US military trainers attributed CCF battlefield success to communist ideology peculiar to Asia; subsequently doctrine developers discounted this ingredient in CCF success. The inconclusive outcome of the Korean War was pinned on strategic and political confusion.[7] The US Army made limited attempts to integrate any operational or tactical lessons learned from the Korean War, but instead focused on the growing threat of the Soviet Union and atomic warfare. Efforts at creating a Pentomic Division, capable of fighting on an atomic battlefield, overshadowed any practical lessons learned from fighting the CCF, considered to be useless on the modern battlefield in Europe.[8] The thoughts that an expanded war against the CCF, even during the actual fighting in Korea, would be of no strategic value to the United States, but merely a distraction was summarized by then Chairman of the Joint Chief of staff, General Omar Bradley, when before a Senate hearing on the war, in May 1951, he said,

> Under present circumstances, we have recommended against enlarging the war from Korea to also include Red China. The course of action often described as a limited war with Red China would increase the risk we are taking by engaging too much of our power in an area that is not the critical strategic prize. Red China is not the powerful nation seeking to dominate the world. Frankly, in the opinion of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, this strategy would involve us in the wrong war, at the wrong place, at the wrong time, and with the wrong enemy.[9]

Even with combat operations conducted against CCF forces ongoing, the focus was to remain on the central threat to US interests - the Soviet Union. US forces faced a dilemma in fighting in Korea. More attention was needed to direct training and equip combat forces in Korea, but the overall need to remain focused on Europe acted against a whole-scale effort. Despite the top-level considerations, it was clear US forces faced a determined enemy who very adroit at taking advantage of US preference for firepower. By maneuvering in close to US forces, CCF regularly voided the firepower advantage and conducted close, furious assaults. The Korean War continued two more years after General Bradley's statement.

The War in Vietnam (1964-1974)

Within ten years of the end of the war in Korea, the US Army once again engaged an Asian enemy in combat. USACF deployed to Vietnam with a wide array of new technological innovations, most notable was the helicopter. The mission initially started as a training mission to build the Republic of Vietnam (RVN) government forces, but soon transformed into full scale combat against North Vietnamese (NVA) and South Vietnamese Communist forces or Vietcong (VC). Many Vietnamese, who eventually formed the NVA and VC, waged war against both the Japanese and the French fighting successfully for many years prior to the US entering Vietnam in a combat role. The skillful combination of irregular and conventional war ideally suited the operational and tactical strengths of the NVA and VC.[10]

Continuing to employ massive amounts of artillery and airpower as a doctrinal base, USACF quickly realized that the NVA and Vietcong were reluctant to present large targets for the US firepower to destroy. The NVA took advantage of their experience

against the French. This experience taught the NVA the need to negate firepower to achieve battlefield success. With no way of matching US firepower, the NVA perfected numerous methods of negating firepower by adopting tactics used by their advisors – the Chinese Communists. During the first few years of the war, the NVA and VC developed several techniques to counter US firepower and mobility provided by the helicopter.

The first large scale battle between the US and NVA occurred in November 1965 in the Ia Drang Valley in western Vietnam. US soldiers of the 1st Battalion, 7th Cavalry, supported by continuous helicopter flights, fought one of the bloodiest battles of the war.[11] The NVA attempted to annihilate the battalion through continuous attacks from every direction. As in Korea, US soldiers found themselves in close proximity with the attacking NVA from the very onset of the battle. The employment of artillery and air firepower significantly reduced the ability of the NVA to mass on any one specific location. In more than one instance due to the close proximity of the NVA, US aircraft and artillery munitions landed on US soldiers, causing several casualties. Lieutenant Colonel Hal Moore, commanding officer of the 1st Battalion, 7th Cavalry, remarked at the discipline displayed by the NVA by not firing until they had "mingled" with US forces.[12] The NVA rushed the landing zones from all directions, engaging only at very close range on repeated attacks over three days. Lieutenant Colonel Moore was forced to close the landing zone to any further reinforcements until the enemy could be repelled.[13]

Confusion during the close fight aided the NVA and detracted from the US forces' situational awareness, vital in delivering accurate air and artillery firepower. As a result, many US leaders were prevented from giving good map coordinates to the air and artillery controllers.[14] Add to this the confusion generated by enemy forces "hugging"

and it became clear that success relied on organic weapons and maneuver skill. During the battle, USACF were forced to land farther away from the original landing zone and walk to the aid of the 1st Battalion, 7th Cavalry, slowing reinforcement and casualty evacuation response time. Over the course of the battle 79 US soldiers were killed with an estimated 634 NVA killed.[15] During the battle, the NVA inflicted high US casualties by employing only light mortars and small arms. As in the Korean War, the NVA used no artillery, air power or tanks. It was the close combat tactics USACF came to call "hugging," which enabled the NVA to gain the initiative.[16]

Seeking to maintain the initiative during the attack, NVA forces held their fire until the last possible minute, as opposed to the USACF practice of engaging the enemy at the furthest range possible.[17] When in the defense, NVA units practiced the same tactical discipline as attacking, by withholding fire until the US forces came within a few feet. The Battle of Dak To in November 1967 was especially bloody for the 173rd Airborne Brigade. The brigade was directed to attack and seize Hill 875 after intelligence learned of a NVA presence there. The ensuing thirty day battle is considered one of the costliest USACF attacks to capture terrain during the entire war. A skillful deception plan lured the USACF into a well prepared killing zone where the NVA employed the modified "hugging" tactic.[18]

Hill 875, which the NVA occupied, was covered with tunnels and well concealed bunkers. The 173rd Airborne Brigade's lead battalions walked into a prepared kill zone and were pinned down by close fire from unknown positions, and then attacked from the rear by a mobile NVA force.[19] The coordinated attack enabled the NVA to continually negate all forms of air and artillery firepower, while causing large numbers of US

casualties and conversely reducing the number of their own casualties. During the course of the battle, the 173rd Airborne Brigade lost 130 paratroopers killed and 314 wounded. The hill was eventually captured by USACF and NVA forces retreated. Once again, as in Korea and earlier in Vietnam, the close proximity of US and NVA forces resulted in US aircraft, attempting to target NVA and VC, inadvertently dropping bombs among US forces causing heavy casualties.[20] The NVA employed only light mortars, RPGs and small arms weapon systems.

The intermingling of soldiers during battles in Vietnam became a common occurrence. Novel tactics to identify enemy locations like employing a "mad minute" where every soldier fired simultaneously out from the perimeter into suspected enemy locations, to both locate and kill any NVA hiding close, became common place as respect for NVA and VC abilities were absorbed by USACF.[21] In an attempt to provide USACF with greater intelligence on NVA and VC units and eliminate subjecting the US forces to fight *adhesion warfare* tactics; the US Army created and employed specialized reconnaissance units called Long Range Recon Patrols (LRRP).[22]

LRRP units were small, six to ten man elite units designed to operate like the NVA and VC by stealthfully inserting and operating behind enemy lines. The LRRPs mission was to find the NVA and VC, well in advance of the main USACF, and inflict high casualties with airpower.[23] The use of a small number of highly skilled soldiers in contrast to larger units reduced the ability of NVA and VC forces tying down larger USACF. The LRRPs provided valuable intelligence enabling US Army commanders to destroy NVA forces without conducting large ground operations. The dangerous behind the lines operation cost the lives of many LRRP soldiers, drawing criticism from some

military officials, but ultimately proved invaluable.[24] The end of the Vietnam War resembled the same situation within the US Army as after the Korean War, but now the lessons learned from ten years of fighting the NVA and VC were to be disregarded by US Army commanders.[25] Vietnam was considered "poison" no matter what useful knowledge could have been gained from the great sacrifice on the battlefield.[26] The US Army once again sought to perfect the large scale warfare concept designed for the European theater of operation, specifically targeting the Soviet Union.

The Inter-war years (1974-1991)

The 1973 Arab – Israel War became the watershed event for the US Army in terms of redefining US doctrine for ground warfare.[27] The ghosts of Vietnam were permanently laid to rest as the US Army embarked on a large-scale modernization of the entire force centered on the M1 Abrams main battle tank, the M2 Bradley infantry fighting vehicle and the Apache anti-tank helicopter. The development of the air-land battle concept in the 1980s solidified the mission of the US Army to "win the first battle" specifically centered on the Soviet threat in Europe.[28]

During this period, several small conflicts in Grenada (1983) and Panama (1989) were completed using limited special operations forces, Rangers, paratroopers, light infantry and a few mechanized forces. These few US Army light forces accomplished their missions with relative success.[29] The army viewed this as a validation of the force mixture levels where most army units remained heavy mechanized forces, constantly training for the conventional fight in Europe. The ability to accomplish these "small wars" with the forces at hand reinforced the current doctrine.[30]

At this time, little attention was paid to the other major conflict taking place in the remote mountains of Afghanistan, where Soviet forces were steadily losing to a band of tribal warriors called the Mujahideen. During the 1980s, the Soviet forces in Afghanistan fought a ferocious battle against an elusive enemy resulting in a Soviet withdrawal in 1989 after nearly 15,000 soldiers had been killed.[31] No serious study of the conflict was conducted for several years and then received only limited distribution.[32] US commanders and planners considered the force structure sound for fighting the Soviet Union in Europe and this remained the focus throughout the 1980s. Not until the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1990 did any consideration for a rescaling of forces become an issue for discussion.

The 1991 Gulf War victory over Iraq greatly influenced any discussion once again. The battlefield victory provided validation in retaining large heavy force formations employing the air-land battle concept. The result was a lack of serious study in the lessons of close in infantry fighting in restricted terrain. In October 1993 in Mogadishu, Somalia were USACF seriously challenged in ground combat. From 3 to 4 October, 1993 US soldiers fought hundreds of Somali militia in the streets of Mogadishu resulting in eighteen US soldiers killed and 79 wounded.[33] This was a significant loss of US soldiers in ground combat since the end of the Vietnam War. Again, the violent clash occurred at close quarters. Using *adhesion warfare* tactics, the Somali militia fought with parity a force of US Rangers, special operations forces and soldiers from the 10th Mountain Division, all of whom possessed a technological and firepower superiority.

The Somali militia, using only rocket propelled grenades (RPG) and small arms shot down several helicopters and trapped a large number of Rangers for over twenty-

four hours.[34] The close nature of the battle found Somali militia and USACF in buildings during the fighting virtually separated by only a single wall. Pinned down and unable to direct air power onto targets, the Rangers anxiously awaited rescue. Panic gripped the US command as a rescue force was hastily assembled and launched to get the Rangers and downed helicopters. Up to that point in operations in Somalia, no contingency or emergency plans were prepared.[35] One pilot was captured from a downed Blackhawk helicopter, eventually spending a month in captivity before being released.

From the initiation of the rescue operation the *ad hoc* US and Pakistani force suffered many casualties. In attempting to reach the trapped Rangers, the rescue force had to fight through numerous close combat ambushes. Only after Pakistani Army armored forces breached the Somali militia perimeter did the Rangers escape. The Somali militia effectively defeated a superior force and forced the US Army to withdraw in the face of mounting casualties and wavering public support.[36] The tactic used by the militia may not have been deliberately planned to negate US firepower, but the practical effect of *adhesion warfare* tactics during the battle in the streets of Mogadishu caught the US Army by surprise. Political officials demanded the military explain how the greatest army in history was forced to rely on Pakistani troops to save US soldiers from destruction.

The rapid cancellation of the US mission in Somalia once again enabled the US Army to side step the issue of close combat with an enemy capable of negating our doctrinal firepower advantage. The bravery of the soldiers prevented a bad situation from deteriorating into a catastrophe. Many viewed the pullout as a defeat. The high loss of life turned the public, who had grown accustomed to low casualties, against the entire

operation. The loss of life, although small when compared to Vietnam, was a shock to the US administration.[37] Potential enemies of the United States took notice. The events of the 1991 Gulf War and Battle in Mogadishu demonstrated that the US did possess vulnerabilities that could be exploited. The air-land battle concept sought to win through massive air and artillery firepower, but clearly did not provide doctrinal solutions to the increasing use of *adhesion warfare* tactics preferred by our enemies.

The War in Afghanistan (2001-2008)

The attacks on the United States on September 11, 2001 thrust the US military into a war with the Taliban - the de facto rulers of Afghanistan. It is important in this analysis to understand the Taliban's unique use of *adhesion warfare* by reviewing their origins and purpose. The Taliban are an extreme Islamic movement originating in the southern Afghan city of Kandahar, and as asserted by author Ahmed Rashid in his book, *Taliban*, they were initially supported by the Pakistani military branch of the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI). It is commonly believed the ISI sought to assist the Taliban in capturing power in Afghanistan and end the decade old civil war to enable Pakistan to open trade routes to the West.[38] Initially the Taliban enjoyed public support for ending the violence but the harsh *Shari* imposed on every ethnic group inside Afghanistan ultimately divided the country. Many Afghan tribes resisted the Taliban rule and eventually formed a coalition called the Northern Alliance. To counter the Northern Alliance, Taliban officials invited Muslim Jihadists from throughout the world to assist them in "cleansing" Afghanistan.

Inside Afghanistan, Osama Bin Laden and his Al Qaeda (AQ) followers were welcomed by the Taliban and provided support in efforts to kill the leader of the Northern

Alliance and to launch attacks on the United States. The support the Taliban provided AQ directly linked them to the attacks on the United States. The US, operating now in collaboration, with the Northern Alliance, attacked into Afghanistan. Initially, US combat operations were conducted using small groups of special operations forces and massive air power to bomb Taliban and AQ positions. The bombing pushed Taliban forces out of Kabul and into the mountainous region in eastern Afghanistan along the Pakistan border. Throughout winter 2001 and into spring 2002, USACF prepared for upcoming ground combat operations. A major operation, code named *Operation Anaconda*, was designed to destroy a large Taliban sanctuary south east of Kabul. *Operation Anaconda* largely consisted of a complex maneuver of thousands of USACF, special operations forces and Afghan National Army, most inserting by helicopter. The operation began on March 2, 2002, and immediately experienced problems.

From the moment the first helicopters landed, USACF came under intense small arms fire (SAF) from concealed Taliban and AQ positions. The USACF, without artillery support because none was deployed into Afghanistan, had to rely solely on aircraft firepower. The altitude and weather conditions soon decreased the effect of all airpower. Taliban and AQ fighters quickly *adhered* themselves to many USACF positions in a clear attempt to negate the limited airpower. Outgunned and badly positioned, the USACF endured twenty four hours of intense fire from numerous Taliban and AQ positions – at close proximity. Without the doctrinally based firepower US forces had to rely on organic weapons and maneuver.

Many helicopters, attempting to reach the USACF, received direct hit from SAF, with one crash landing on Takur Ghar ridge. The Rangers, who had been on the crashed

helicopter, fought for several hours, at close range, without any support. Seven Rangers were killed at Takur Ghar – all at close range by SAF. The entire operation lasted ten days, but the heaviest fighting took place on the first day, after which most Taliban and AQ had withdrawn from the area.[39]

Despite being technologically superiority, USACF found themselves battling an enemy on virtually equal terms. The Taliban and AQ forces possessed no artillery, tanks or airpower, limited heavy machine guns and few light mortars. Hand held weapons such as RPGs and SAF effectively brought the US operation to a standstill. Once the Taliban and AQ closed the distance to USACF, those forces found themselves outgunned and often pinned down, unable to maneuver. The Taliban and AQ actions were labeled "extreme" and in the end, the higher percentage of enemy dead compared to US casualties was determined as US successful operation, but doubts about the US execution of the operation persisted. Operation Anaconda demonstrated the ability of the Taliban to fight, but the wrong lessons were taken away and little change was made within the US military.[40]

Over the following months, the Taliban, who still viewed themselves as the legitimate Afghan government, reduced their battlefield presence and regrouped inside Pakistan planning the next action. This lack of Taliban fighters inside Afghanistan was viewed as an end to the war. In late 2002, large scale US military operations were halted, essentially bringing the war to a close and declaring the Taliban defeated. Events would soon prove this was only an *operational* pause in a very long campaign the Taliban intended to wage.[41] In the summer of 2004, Taliban forces initiated a series of violent attacks against government, military and police targets. The formation of the Afghan

National Army (ANA) and increased Afghan National Police (ANP) throughout the countryside triggered the Taliban to return back into action. Attempting to discredit and prevent a strong national government from gaining momentum with the people, the Taliban fought with renewed strength and purpose.

During 2005, and into 2006, Taliban forces openly engaged USACF. The ensuing battles once again followed predictable patterns of previous conflicts in ferocity and ingenuity on the part of the Taliban. The ability of the Taliban to negate the US firepower advantage became increasingly apparent. The scale of assault mounted by the Taliban shocked US commanders, as illustrated during the largest combat action during 2005. In the battle, a reinforced paratrooper company from the 173rd Airborne Brigade was surrounded by over 300 Taliban fighters during a seven hour battle.

Utilizing signal intercepts, the paratroopers identified Taliban locations and conducted an air assault near the village of Chalbar, in northern Kandahar Province. Within minutes, the paratroopers fired upon a group of Taliban fighters on a dense rocky mountainside. The Taliban returned fire and held their position to allow the US forces to close on their location. At that point, the Taliban radio contacted other Taliban fighters in the area, in an effort the attack the US forces from all sides. Ever mindful of US airpower, the Taliban commanders, heard by US forces by signal intercepts, directing their forces to "keep on the Americans" to avoid bombing by US aircraft. During the seven hour battle, US forces remained within fifty yards of the Taliban despite repeated attempts to create a buffer to bring in aerial firepower from either helicopters or fixed wing aircraft.[42] Under these circumstances the use of aerial firepower is clearly too

dangerous. The Taliban operational plan clearly orchestrated to achieve the tactical result.

The Taliban utilized a large volume of automatic weapons and RPG fire throughout the battle, significantly greater than that possessed by the US paratroopers on the ground. It was determined that one in four Taliban fighters fired a PK 7.62mm machine gun. A paratrooper platoon of thirty six men fielded only two 7.62mm machine guns. The Taliban sought to exploit this clear advantage, once they had negated US air power from bombing their positions. Only skillful positioning of several additional paratrooper platoons, onto higher mountain positions by helicopter, forced the Taliban to abandon their positions.

A total of six US helicopters were severely damaged by Taliban fire while inserting the paratrooper platoons into critical positions. The Taliban withdrew after losing over 100 fighters, but a successful US outcome was never certain. Taliban forces maintained extremely high volumes of fire for over seven hours while retaining close proximity to the paratroopers. In subsequent battles during 2005 and 2006, the Taliban continually displayed an astounding knowledge and practical application of the USACF doctrinal tactics and techniques. Taliban attacks soon demonstrated how "standard" the USACF tactics and techniques had become and how the Taliban were exploiting them. Specifically, the Taliban knew where and when aircraft would be employed and reaction times of reinforcements.

On 22 August, 2007, Taliban forces attacked a paratrooper platoon from the 173rd Airborne Brigade at combat outpost (COP) "Ranch House" in the Nuristan Province. The three pronged attack initially targeted the COP tactical operations center, destroying

the radio antennas. Several of the US observation posts positioned around the COP were destroyed as the Taliban breached the COP main perimeter. Fighting within the perimeter was hand-to-hand with grenades and anything that could be used as a weapon; separated from his weapon, a sergeant resorted to throwing expended radio batteries at attacking Taliban soldiers.[43] The pivotal action came when Staff Sergeant Erick Phillips, mortar platoon sergeant, directed US aircraft to strafe the COP itself.[44] Several strafing attacks caught the Taliban by surprise and broke the assault. The paratroopers quickly reformed the perimeter defense.

Staff Sergeant Phillip's last minute direction to the aircraft, as stated in his Distinguished Service Cross citation, "was credited with saving the entire US platoon from certain destruction." Again, Taliban forces attacked with small arms, few heavy machine guns and RPGs, but were able to overwhelm USACF and breach into a secure US COP. Only the quick actions of a seasoned combat sergeant prevented a Taliban success. During the three hour battle half of the entire US force was wounded.

With increasing attacks during the first few months of 2008, Taliban forces continue to press close combat against numerous US positions. The common feature of all Taliban combat operations, where heavy US casualties occur, is the deliberate use of close proximity tactics. The ability to get in close, and stay close, inevitably leads to high US and ANA casualties. The Taliban's *adhesion warfare* tactics are essentially those encountered in Korea and Vietnam and demonstrate that "hugging" is more than an impromptu reaction. These historical examples demonstrate that our adversaries deliberately employ *adhesion warfare* tactics to negate our doctrinal firepower advantage

and inflict high casualties against USACF. There is every reason to believe these tactics will be a continuing characteristic of direct combat against US forces in the future.

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[44]Author's interview with SGT. Sean Samaroo C Company, 2nd Battalion (Airborne) 503rd Infantry, September 15, 2007

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS

Introduction

The review of current and past battles and a comparison of enemy *adhesion warfare* tactics raise additional questions important in this study. These questions further identify and define the primary thesis question – *Does US Army operational level employment and tactical training of combat forces adequately prepare those forces to defeat an enemy who is capable of negating the US doctrinal stand-off based firepower advantage?* This chapter is divided into two sections and will answer the thesis question by providing analysis into the areas of: 1) The operational employment model of USACF in Afghanistan and how past conflicts influenced it. 2) The tactical training conducted by USACF prior to serving in Afghanistan. 3) An analysis of combat casualties in relation to past and present US conflicts and how they correlate to the enemy use of *adhesion warfare* tactics.

Central to analyzing these research questions is an understanding of the process the US Army utilizes to create doctrine. This is especially important in examining this thesis topic since the doctrinal approach had an immediate impact in Afghanistan. Historical events and the corresponding lessons learned from these events played an important part in determining the structure of the US Army and the doctrinal employment of USACF in Afghanistan. This analysis begins with an overview of the current US Army doctrinal force structure in Afghanistan, and then how historical events and decisions by US Army leadership determined this doctrinal path. Assumptions on the part of both the USACF and Taliban forces will be analyzed to understand how the

current conduct of combat operations in Afghanistan fits into a respective doctrinal model, if one exists, and if it is successful for either combatant, and why. Central to this analysis is the process of doctrine development, and the influence / impact of the US Army's coincidental transformation effort (from the Cold war era army) initiated prior to the Global War on Terrorism.

Operational Employment Doctrinal of USACF

The US Army was in the midst of an enormous institutional transformation effort prior to the start of the Global War on Terrorism and the subsequent US deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan. One of the primary changes has been the Brigade Combat Team (BCT) organization. This newly conceived structure fundamentally changed not only the organization, but the employment concept. Introduced into combat in 2004, the combat challenges faced by USACF bring into question the operational benefit of the BCT doctrinal structure as it is currently employed in the mountains of Afghanistan. Organized as the primary high intensity war fighting US Army formation (prior to 9/11), the BCT is designed to be a self-sustaining combat organization capable of a wide spectrum of combat challenges from high intensity to stability operations utilizing internal assets.[1] Light Infantry, Airborne and Air Assault BCTs are the types of units currently deployed to Afghanistan, and the considered units for this study.

The BCT's strongest capabilities are in the areas of target detection and fire support made possible by organic reconnaissance and artillery battalions respectively. Identifying the enemy at long range by utilizing several types of surveillance and target acquisition platforms theoretically enables the BCT commander to deploy his maneuver forces in an economy-of force role, theoretically allowing the commander to efficiently

focus his combat strength at the right place and time afforded to him by his organic reconnaissance assets.[2] The addition of the artillery battalion provides those focused combat forces a tremendous amount of organic stand-off firepower to decimate the enemy. However, to accommodate the addition of the reconnaissance and artillery battalions, the BCT doctrinal structure, based on the traditional brigade structure, reduced the amount of infantry battalions from three to two – effectively loosing over 500 infantrymen.[3]

The reduction of one-third of the "traditional brigade" maneuver firepower is thoroughly discussed by Major Francis Moss in his 2008 Master of Military Arts and Science Thesis, *The Cost and Benefits of Adding a Third Maneuver Battalion to the Brigade Combat Team*. In this study, Major Francis makes a compelling argument focused on the large monetary and equipping burden placed on the US Army by transforming to the BCT. Central to his statistical analysis is a reduction of the large number of infantry from the BCT, both formation and individual soldiers.[4]

Although currently employed in counterinsurgency operations inside Iraq and Afghanistan, the BCT organizational structure, designed more for the high intensity battlefield against an identifiable enemy, does not appear well suited. The very nature of counterinsurgency operations places a premium on "boots on the ground" and tends to discount massive firepower capabilities.[5] US Army operational planners need only look at the historical examples from recent conflicts to discover patterns enemy forces continually use against USACF. If history is any guide – and Chapter 3 provides ample evidence – an increase in firepower at the cost of ground combat soldiers proves ineffective in the counterinsurgency fight. The substitution of indirect firepower within

the BCT at the expense of maneuver forces is problematic for the conduct US Army operations in Afghanistan now and will remain so in the future.

The US Army's selection of the BCT organizational model is another adjustment in a long series of reshaping, or transformation, approaches set in motion after the end of the Vietnam War.[6] The strategic and political miscalculation of the Vietnam War, the failure of the US Army leadership to identify the true nature of the insurgency and the high casualties suffered by USACF convinced an entire generation of future US Army leaders to expunge everything and anything related to Vietnam and counterinsurgency warfare. Following Vietnam, the US Army leadership shied away from allocating resources that advanced our understanding and capabilities in counterinsurgency warfare. The prevailing view focused attention on a return to operations in high intensity combat (conventional warfare). Counterinsurgency as both an educational and training paradigm was viewed as an unappealing, unprofessional and impractical employment of the US Army war fighting assets.[7] Any proponents of this style of warfare were pariahs as the US Army returned to its pre-Vietnam outlook.

What followed was a rapid dumping of lessons learned and reorientation of the US Army towards a conventional war. Advocates of the high intensity warfare centric force cited the 1973 Arab v. Israel war, highlighting the conduct of large scale armored warfare, as a clear example of future conflict – and justification for their views.[8] This example provided clear purpose and direction and as tensions with the Soviet Union continued, the reorientation justified and the planning and training support was implemented[9]. There were officers who offered lessons from the Korean and Vietnam Wars to demonstrate significant flaws in this single focused doctrinal rational.[10] They

sought to balance the doctrinal approach to confront the Soviet Union with combat lessons learned over the two wars; however these lessons were easily dismissed as aberrations.

Over the course of the Vietnam War, the US Army conducted a mixture of high intensity, low intensity and counterinsurgency operations. Many company and field grade officers gained valuable knowledge of enemy tactics and procedures covering the entire spectrum of combat operations. However, few scholarly works were produced that addressed counterinsurgency warfare. Consequently, years of valuable experience in counterinsurgency were either not recorded or disregarded out of hand – especially any rigorous study of enemy tactics and techniques.[11] As the war escalated in intensity, change from a maneuver based operations to firepower based operations emerged most prominently within the 1st Infantry Division.[12] The architect of the change was the division commander – Major General William E. DePuy.[13]

The localized change reduced casualties and seemed to avoid enemy contact; consequently these tactics formed the doctrinal base for the future shift in the maneuver – firepower equation. In Vietnam, the initial maneuver centric form of counterinsurgency warfare, incorporating aggressive pursuit of North Vietnamese Army (NVA) and Viet Cong (VC) forces, enabled the 1st Infantry Division to decisively defeat and secured their area of operations.[14] Major General DePuy based his tactics around helicopter and infantry units conducting highly mobile combat operations against NVA and VC positions.[15] The emphasis was on the infantry closing with and decisively destroying the enemy – never letting the enemy go until killed. These maneuver tactics required extremely experienced officers and NCOs to execute complicated coordination between

all US units. The tactics were sound and effective, but resulted in a high level of US casualties.[16]

As casualties grew, the US Army lost public and political support and firepower replaced infantry maneuver as the primary means of killing the enemy.[17] The effort was placed on saturating suspected enemy areas with massive amounts of munitions from both artillery and aircraft. This tactical role reversal soon found momentum and the beginning of the firepower centric strategy took hold in Vietnam.[18] As the war grew unpopular in the United States, pressure to reduce casualties provided further impetus for employing greater and greater amounts of firepower to defeat the NVA and VC forces. Infantry forces, both US Army and Marine Corps, lost the maneuver initiative to the NVA and VC by remaining on firebases, while attempting to subdue them through shells and bombs.[19] The shift in US operations necessitated a change in NVA and VC tactics.

The NVA and VC reverted to previous successful tactics used against the French, and those used by the CCF against the US in Korea, to prevent or negate the US firepower advantage. Getting in close to USACF, the NVA and VC prevented firing of US aircraft and artillery munitions for fear of hitting USACF.[20] The innovation by NVA and VC forces to negate the US firepower drew the attention of tactical level commanders who witnessed firsthand this capability. The ability of NVA and VC forces to "hug" USACF was documented by these US commanders and was a routine technique used with great effect. The Vietnam experience added to a list of *adhesion warfare* tactics employed by North Korean and Communist Chinese forces during the Korean War.

After US forces withdrew from Vietnam in 1973, the US Army leadership, influenced heavily by General DePuy as the US Army Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) commander, sought to create army doctrine prevented repetition of Vietnam experiences.[21] Even during the Vietnam War, they argued that conventional high intensity warfare should *always* be the sole focus of the US Army. With the war ended, the US Army was set about solely focusing on a future war in Europe, against the Soviet Union and Warsaw Pact.[22] The body of experience gained by the US Army in conventional operations in World War II were to shape the return to the conventional warfare doctrine.

Some officers like Lieutenant General Hal Moore – a company commander in Korea and battalion commander in Vietnam – witnessed successful tactical counterinsurgency warfare operations and counseled against disregarding the hard won lessons of Vietnam and Korea for a "conventional war only" adoption in US Army doctrine.[23] They fought for a doctrine that focused on a broader range of warfare that encompassed what they experienced; small wars of limited scope and long duration against a low tech determined enemy. Those who witnessed firsthand the ability of the enemy to negate not only US, but French, military might argued the new firepower centric strategy had severe limitations and could be countered.[24]

As noted, the US Army quickly wrote doctrine and instituted major weapons programs designed to conduct high intensity warfare against the Soviet Union and Warsaw Pact on the plains of Europe.[25] Over the next eighteen years, the US Army perfected the firepower centric doctrine of Air-Land Battle culminating with the decisive victory against Iraq during *Operation Desert Storm* in 1991. This victory was viewed as

justification for the return to traditional doctrine combined with the incorporation of a vast array of new technological weaponry.[26] It is important to note that during this period, no counterinsurgency warfare doctrine had been written or updated in over 15 years.[27]

This *Operation Desert Storm* victory demonstrated the benefits of technology operating in concert with a massive stand-off based firepower centric force. It also offered the added benefit of low casualties – something America increasingly sought.[28] The application of massive firepower against a static enemy reduced the need for infantry maneuver, with many soldiers never firing their individual weapons during the entire conflict. Target acquisition and destruction from great distances was made possible by incredible technological advances, and after the excessive loss of life in Vietnam, keeping low casualties marked the political and military success of any US operation.[29] *Operation Desert Storm* was hailed as the most one-sided victory in the history of warfare. The major criticism, often overlooked, was in the lengthy time requirement needed to deploy heavy forces for the ground war.[30] US Army planners agreed that in the future an adept enemy would not sit idle while the US Army took six months to build a force. A major concern in transformation to the BCT organization structure was to speed up deployment time.[31]

Transforming the legacy brigade, of *Operation Desert Storm*, into the new BCT, created a rapidly deployable, robust force with a large array of "see first" systems.[32] The reduction in the number of infantry combat forces for increased long range firepower enables the BCT commander to concentrate on the long distance fight utilizing his organic artillery, intelligence gathering and observation assets. Seemingly a perfect

mixture for conducting a second *Operation Desert Storm* high intensity battle against a conventional enemy, but with the start of the Global War on Terrorism, the US Army was forced to conduct counterinsurgency warfare for a second time within thirty years.

From the beginning of the Global War on Terrorism against the Taliban and Al Qaeda, US Army commanders sought to employ all US technological and firepower advantages. Originally, the war against the Taliban in Afghanistan was envisioned to be fought primarily with high technology, airpower and elite special operations forces. The strategy as described by President George W. Bush was to be a "different kind of war."[33] Soon after, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld proclaimed, "You don't fight terrorists by using conventional capabilities."[34] When the initial battles from 2001 to 2003 failed to end the war decisively in Afghanistan, large numbers of conventional forces deployed for sustained combat operations. Today, the US is entering the seventh year of combat operations in Afghanistan, and BCT formation faces serious combat challenges it was not designed to counter – *adhesion warfare*.

In Afghanistan, warfare conducted against the US is typified by close-combat battle dominated overwhelmingly by small arms fire (SAF) from hand held weapons and improvised explosive devices (IED). As a form of *adhesion warfare* tactics, IEDs are more common and dangerous in Iraq, but are increasingly being used against USACF and coalition forces in Afghanistan. Although not specific to this thesis, the IED threat in Afghanistan differs in scale from IEDs used in Iraq. Due to lack of developed road networks and the ability to manufacture sophisticated explosives, IEDs in Iraq are larger in explosive charge and more abundant than in Afghanistan.[35] The use of cell phones in Iraq additionally allows the person detonating the IED to be at greater distance, whereas

the lack of cell phone coverage in most of Afghanistan requires the person detonating the IED to be much closer – placing them much closer to the blast and US forces.[36] In Afghanistan, SAF produces a greater number of coalition casualties than IEDs.[37] (For a breakdown of the Global War on Terrorism US casualties see Annex A) The Taliban, unlike the insurgents in Iraq, place the greatest emphasis on direct fire engagements with SAF more than IEDs, therefore, as the statistics prove USACF within the BCT in Afghanistan face the deadliest enemy threat from SAF.[38]

As discussed in Chapter 3, *adhesion warfare* tactics are not new in the US Army's combat history. From the Korean War through Vietnam, USACF frequently reported on the enemies' ability to negate airpower and artillery by getting "in close" or "hugging" US units.[39] Surprisingly, despite the lack of addressing this enemy capability for almost twenty years, the reorganized, US Army manual FM 3-90.6, *The Brigade Combat Team*, includes two small, at least in general terms, but substantial comments on enemy tactics relating to *adhesion warfare*, under the title *Threats the Brigade Combat Team Faces*, broken into two separate paragraphs:

> 1-23. In complex terrain, opponents can close undetected with the BCT forces, and employ low signature weapons to make force protection at the BCT level difficult. This combined with a myriad of commercially available deception measures, raises the level of uncertainty, and slows the pace of BCT maneuver, thereby making it more vulnerable.[40]

Although not specifically mentioning close combat by determined enemies' intent on causing high casualties, this passage mentions the use of "undetected routes" where enemies will try and get close to the BCT:

> 1-24. Enemies seek to complicate BCT targeting by "hugging" BCT forces, or through shielding forces in cities, among civilian populations, or within landmarks and social or religious targets.[41]

The actual mention of "hugging" implies some recognition of *adhesion warfare* tactic, but the wording seems to downplay the actual threat. In FM 3-90.6, the reference to cities and among civilian populations is addressing more of an intelligence, reconnaissance and surveillance (ISR) task required by USACF to be performed.[42] Additionally, the implication that the enemy will use civilians as "shields" is not emphasized, and also it does not weigh the "hugging" as a method to negate the inherent firepower advantage in air and artillery of the BCT, but as a targeting complication of a minor degree. This is the only mention of the potential for the deliberate negating of BCT firepower by the enemy in the entire FM.

In Chapter 6 FM 3-90.6, Offensive Operations, the only mention of close combat by the enemy is when it states, "The enemy will *probably* seek close combat in urban or restricted terrain."[43] No other mention of close combat is made in the FM 3-90.6. Most striking is the heavy emphasis on constant ISR maintenance. Throughout FM 3-90.6, references are made to, "maintain ISR within the BCT, where the inability to maintain ISR will reduce the pace of the BCT maneuver."[44] In this definition, the reduced *pace* of maneuver correlates to an increase in US casualties, if the BCT reduces the speed, or pace, more casualties will be taken, therefore keep operations from stalling. No specific guidance is stated if this cannot be accomplished, but with limited USACF, specifically infantry forces, the BCT must dictate the time and place for an engagement – focusing the limited infantry forces is doctrinal to success.[45] As the doctrinal centerpiece of the US Army operational capabilities and employment in the Global War on Terrorism, the

BCT does not address or even contemplate the type of combat currently experienced by USACF in Afghanistan.

Vast differences exist between how the enemy is portrayed in FM 3-90.6 and what historical evidence indicates. The enemies' ability to negate doctrinal firepower is a systemic problem with countermeasures required from operational to tactical levels. The tactical employment of the BCT's maneuver battalions down to platoon level must prepare and support the soldiers' attempt to defeat the most lethal capabilities of the enemy. Tactical training for the US soldiers, specifically in Afghanistan, must focus on the enemy's greatest tactical capability in any combat theater – *adhesion warfare*.

The operational employment of the BCT in Afghanistan, as the primary USACF war fighting formation, is not enabling the US Army to achieve victory against the Taliban. As history has demonstrated, future adversaries will undoubtedly take note and strive to employ and improve upon the tactics utilized by the Taliban. Lack of a operational level formula in Afghanistan to defeat the Taliban is placing greater burden on tactical – battalion to platoon – level operations, requiring the stretched USACF to fight increasingly difficult battles against an emboldened enemy who is increasingly confident of his ability to negate US firepower by continuing to employ *adhesion warfare* tactics.

USACF Tactical Operations in Afghanistan

The primary mission for the US Army in Afghanistan is to defeat the Taliban in every battle or at every opportunity. As discussed earlier, the sheer lack of numbers is forcing the individual soldier to shoulder a greater burden against an effective enemy, often fighting against them at parity.[46] The lack of an operational level solution to defeat

adhesion warfare is requiring USACF to rely heavily upon tactical level maneuver; however, as demonstrated US doctrine and organizational structure are not designed to support these operations. As currently designed, the BCT relies on a vast amount of standoff firepower enhanced by ISR assets with substantially fewer infantry forces is not ideally suited for this form of warfare.[47] Dispersed tactical units, lacking sufficient forces, in the rugged mountain of Afghanistan are prevented from conducting the maneuver required to defeat the Taliban. This disadvantage enables the Taliban to maintain close proximity or "hug" USACF, often in close proximity to US Army bases and outposts.

At the operational level, the BCT is designated a large geographical area of operation, with field artillery units in direct support, within Afghanistan.[48] The BCT further subdivides the area of operation into battalion sectors, which in turn is reduced to company sectors. In Afghanistan, the US Army is continually constructing forward operating bases (FOB) or smaller company and platoon sized combat out posts (COP) in an attempt to influence the surrounding countryside by a constant presence of forces.[49] Frequently these bases are placed under constant direct and indirect fire by Taliban forces – similar to what happened to Soviet bases during the 1980s. Tied to numerous fixed locations, USACF below battalion level find themselves under a constant state of siege.

A recent article by Senior Airman James Bolinger published by the Combined Joint Task Force Command 82 in Afghanistan stated, "Everyday, U.S. Soldiers in the Tagab Valley (eastern Afghanistan) face a very real threat of death. There have been more attacks on these troops than days their fire base has been in existence. Six Soldiers have been injured since the coalition built two fire bases here earlier this year."[50]

Continuous attacks on COPs and FOBs tie down large numbers of USACF in static security positions further reducing the units maneuver ability. The practical response to this tactic is to find and destroy the Taliban who are attacking however, reducing COP security to assemble maneuver forces against the Taliban is problematic and presents the commander with difficult decisions. The Taliban learned this valuable *adhesion warfare* tactic against the Soviet Union. (for additional analysis of Afghan / Taliban warfare tactics see Appendix B)

Too few troops runs counter to effective counterinsurgency strategy as an article in the Baltimore Sun pointed out when it wrote, "US troops are spread out thinly across eastern Afghanistan, not in accordance with the counterinsurgency doctrine espoused by Gen. David Petraeus."[51] The lack of sufficient troops, specifically in the doctrinal design of the BCT, despite a clear firepower advantage seems to be counterproductive. FM 3-24, Counterinsurgency, clearly states the need for, "large numbers of troops for both security and operational forces specifically to be responsive to a rapidly changing enemy."[52] USACF, especially the infantry forces, find themselves tasked to accomplish an increasingly difficult doctrinal role relying solely upon their organic weapon and personal preparations – often not at all what they expected. Nowhere more so than in Afghanistan is the individual infantryman placed in such a precarious position with scant preparations in training and equipment evident. These few infantry forces are carrying a tremendous burden in close combat against *adhesion warfare* tactics employed by the Taliban.

Although in the Global War on Terrorism many different military occupational specialties conduct close combat against Taliban forces in Afghanistan, it is by doctrine

the infantry which conduct the offensive operations, designed to find and destroy the Taliban.[53] By doctrine, *infantry closes with the enemy by fire and maneuver in order to destroy or capture him or repel his assault*. The infantry forms the nucleus of the Army's fighting strength.[54] Therefore, infantry forces must be prepared, above all others, to deliver defeat to the Taliban in close combat. Infantry training must specifically focus on preparing soldiers to accomplish the US Army doctrinal definition of their duty description in order to accomplish the mission, however serious deficiencies exist in infantry training.

The current training conducted by forces deploying to Afghanistan devotes a large amount time towards tasks not specifically beneficial in preparing to counter *adhesion warfare*. US Army combatives, urban close quarters battle involving room clearing and extended range marksmanship with the ill equipped M4 rifle stand out as the key tasks not providing this benefit to the detriment of the soldiers operating at the tactical level.[55] To provide the advantage to the soldiers engaging in close combat in Afghanistan, each training task should reinforce a doctrinal approach designed to defeat *adhesion warfare* conducted by the enemy. (For a detailed critique on individual soldier tactical level training see Appendix A)

Above all other basic infantry tasks, the infantry, need to prepare for close combat, involving man to man battle at the "intimate level" or, as close enough to see into the enemy's soul.[56] Much as the US Army placed great emphasis on developing an armor killing capability focused on the Warsaw Pact, training for soldiers and officers alike must identify *adhesion warfare* tactics and how to counter them. The soldier must be thoroughly prepared for the acts of close combat involving killing the enemy *face to*

face with their individual weapons. Simply stated, soldiers currently receive limited indoctrination and preparation for killing at close distance.[57]

Historically, the act of killing at close distance requires intense physical and mental preparation. The detrimental effect of not preparing a soldier for the intense physical and psychological aspects of close combat were first recognized and studied in 1950 by army historian S.L.A. Marshall.[58] Marshall determined though exhaustive research that a soldier's ability to fight effectively is dramatically reduced based on his *perceived expectation* of combat and total amount of training he received in this form of combat, prior to actual combat.[59] Soldiers must be trained to meet the *adhesion warfare* challenges.

The benefits of training for close combat to counter *adhesion warfare* are beneficial not just in Afghanistan, but in creating a focused infantry force prepared for any enemy using similar deadly tactics. Infantry training is extremely personal, requiring strong mental and physical bearing to prepare the soldier for fighting and killing in combat. In the past, the doctrinal aspects of "killing" were focused on specific enemies. During the 1970s and 1980s, the US Army focused on killing Soviet soldiers in Europe.[60] By conducting a doctrinal review based on lessons from the Global War on Terrorism, individual and collective training should be based on the most dangerous tactics and techniques encountered by the USACF – *adhesion warfare* as practiced by the Taliban and Al Qaeda fighters in Afghanistan.

US Combat Casualties vice Enemy Combat Abilities

Historically, doctrine has been developed against a specific enemy, as with the Soviet Union, however doctrine for the Global War on Terrorism appears not focus on

any specific threat and seems to mirror many aspects of the doctrine developed during the 1980s and 1990s. The following statistical review will center on infantry casualties unless otherwise noted. As discussed in Chapter 3, during combat operations in Korea and Vietnam USACF faced determined enemies with a preference for *adhesion warfare*.

In analyzing battles involving the highest numbers of US casualties, the enemy the US faced in Korea and Vietnam displayed similar *adhesion warfare* skills at negating the US doctrinal firepower advantage. Enemies in both wars used massed infantry as the primary casualty producing instrument; both lacked technological parity with US GCF; both readily accepted high casualties among their forces; both sought to inflict high casualties upon US GCF. The infantry units, both US Army and Marine Corps, were charged with finding and killing the enemy.

As previously stated, the infantry doctrinally seek out the enemy on a daily basis, therefore they have the greatest chance to kill or be killed by the enemy. Currently, infantry units comprise less than 4% of the total uniformed Department of Defense while historically suffering four out of five combat related deaths.[61] By comparison, with the end of the Second World War, only eight tank crewmen have died as a result of fire from an enemy tank. These eight were killed during the Korean War, although tank crewmen have died in combat since then, it has not been from an enemy tank.[62] Infantry soldiers are clearly the most at risk in combat by doctrine by the very nature of close combat with the enemy. But in comparison with tremendous success rates among survivability statistic of tank crewmember, little advance in infantry survivability is present. Despite great advances in individual soldier protection (body armor), intelligence technology and

organic firepower, infantrymen continue to be killed at virtually the same ratios as previous conflicts.

In the Korean War, the ratio of US killed in action (KIA) vice enemy KIA was thirteen enemy soldiers to one US infantryman.[63] During the Vietnam War the estimated ratio, due to no firm data, was increased to fifteen to one. As of December 2007, Iraq averages nine to one and Afghanistan is estimated at thirteen to one.[64] Over fifty-four years have passed since the end of the Korean War, yet the ability to ensure enemy combatants are killed at a greater rate that USACF is roughly the same. Statistics point to a disturbing trend where it seems no amount of technology advances or doctrinal change has increased US Army lethality when measured against US and enemy casualty ratios.

From the beginning of combat operations in Afghanistan until August 2008, half of the KIA casualties were inflicted by small arms fire (SAF) and rocket propelled grenades (RPG) – both key weapons in *adhesion warfare* tactics. The remaining casualties were inflicted by IEDs.[65] With the level of body armor worn by USACF, offering the greatest protection against SAF, the amount of KIA by SAF is alarming. SAF casualties, in proportion to Iraq, are much higher in Afghanistan. The Taliban are able to kill heavily protected US soldiers, in state-of-the-art body armor, at equal rates as in the Korean and Vietnam Wars.

In contrast, a greater percentage of US soldiers killed by SAF in Iraq are attributed to precision fire in urban centers, such as Baghdad, whereas soldiers killed by SAF in Afghanistan are attributed to types of combat not normally associated with urban areas or villages, but close combat in restricted terrain usually in pitched battles.[66] On a statistical level the data clearly points to *adhesion warfare* as the preferred method of

close combat in Afghanistan. The ability of the Taliban to perform close combat relies heavily upon their ability to attain and maintain close proximity without fear of US standoff based firepower – the application of *adhesion warfare*. The data clearly demonstrates SAF as the primary threat to USACF, followed by IEDs. *Adhesion warfare* is clearly the greatest threat in Afghanistan to USACF.

Recent combat actions confirm the Taliban's ability to conduct multiple complex operations designed to inflict high casualties. They can simultaneously maintain a high operational tempo regardless of their own casualties. Historical analysis demonstrates the Taliban, whose senior leaders were part of the Mujahideen fighting the Soviet forces, were able to sustain extremely high casualties and still maintain a high level of combat effectiveness.[67] The Taliban leaders use the lessons learned in combat against the Soviets to confront and negate the firepower might of the US. The Soviet Union tried to implement many aspects of counterinsurgency and conventional war tactics resulting in limited success. After almost ten years of warfare, the Soviet Union chose to withdraw from Afghanistan rather than escalate the conflict with the inevitable rise in Soviet and Afghan casualties. The Afghan Mujahideen viewed this as an admission of defeat for the Soviet Union and attributed a large measure of their success to their battlefield tactics. (for additional analysis see Appendix B)

Recently in Afghanistan, Western members of the Coalition from France, Great Britain, Canada and the Netherlands have been specifically targeted by Taliban attack intent on producing high casualties in an attempt to sway those countries public support possible withdrawing forces from Afghanistan.[68] Most seriously, on 17 August 2008 near Khowst in eastern Afghanistan, ten French paratroopers were killed during a three

hour close combat firefight. Taliban forces conducted an early morning assault, perfected against Soviet forces almost twenty years prior, to gain close proximity to the French forces and attacked with SAF.[69] Although suffering casualties, the Taliban publically decree a success when even a single coalition soldier is killed, regardless of Taliban losses. Countering the Taliban ability to conduct *adhesion warfare* is critical to success in Afghanistan; the historical analysis clearly demonstrated a needed change in operational and tactical employment of USACF and future efforts.

As history has shown, the US Army has failed to understand the true nature of *adhesion warfare* tactics and how our enemies deliberately use them. Conversely our enemies capitalized on these experiences and drew their own conclusions, 1) The US will always depend on massive firepower and technology, as demonstrated during *Operation Desert Storm*, as the key to victory in any war, 2) US doctrine in operational and tactical warfare is designed to, and must quickly overwhelm enemies, requiring fewer ground forces and keeping US casualties low, 3) the Vietnam War, and to a lesser degree the Korean War, were an aberration in US military history, not to be repeated or even studied in detail.

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CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATION

> If you know the enemy and know yourself you need not fear the results of a hundred battles.
>
> Sun Tzu, 500 BC

Over 2,000 years ago the warrior-philosopher Chinese general Sun Tzu describes with clarity an aspect in the art of war foretelling how knowledge of both your own and your enemies strengths and weaknesses, virtually guarantees victory in a hundred battles.[1] Sun Tzu's dictum for success was predicated on open and clear understanding of both strengths and weaknesses culminating in the ability to mitigate weakness and capitalize on strengths, therefore when military units are able to master these aspects of warfare, they are truly undefeatable. However, in an attempt to master one's own combat efficiency and performance, military organizations often misinterpret their own strengths in relation to perceived enemy weaknesses.

USACF continually overestimate their own strengths and underestimate the Taliban's strengths with deadly consequences, as this recent incident illustrates. On 13 July 2008, in a remote valley near the village of Wanat, Afghanistan 100 Taliban fighters attacked a US Army platoon, occupying a temporary defensive position in a pre-dawn attack.[2] The ensuing battle, fought at close range, left nine US soldiers dead and fifteen wounded. The US Army reacted with surprise at the ability of the Taliban to conduct this attack.[3] The "surprise" should not have been a surprise. For over seven years in Afghanistan, the use of *adhesion warfare* tactics has enabled the Taliban to negate the US doctrinal standoff based firepower advantage effectively bringing parity to the

combatants inflicting heavy casualties among US forces. The Taliban continually demonstrate their expertise at forcing USACF to fight a type of combat they are unprepared to conduct. The battle at Wanat was the deadliest single attack on USACF to date in Afghanistan.

Through historical analysis and doctrinal reflection, it is evident that in order to defeat *adhesion warfare* tactics, the US Army must realize that firepower cannot replace maneuver or be the primary means of victory. As discussed in the analysis, current USACF operational and tactical employment characteristics resemble closely a force designed to fight a linear battle on the fields of Europe and not a counterinsurgency. This, in turn, places US forces at a distinct disadvantage with lethal consequences. Specifically, the US Army must determine a course of action aimed at defeating the Taliban's preferred method of combat – *adhesion warfare* – not just one that tries to prevent the negating of the US doctrinal firepower in close combat.

The perfection of systems, both technical and tactical, designed to defeat a Soviet style foe has clearly demonstrated a continuing desire to perfect our current warfighting doctrine vice adaption to the current foe. The transition from a legacy brigade to a BCT is, in fact, a clear demonstration that the US Army is an inward focused force less capable of adjusting or adapting to a decidedly low-tech enemy. The analysis clearly points to a lack, specifically in Afghanistan, to learn from previous battles against similar enemies. If this was not the case, USACF would be enjoying clear and decisive battlefield dominance over the Taliban, however, as the battle of Wanat demonstrates, they do not.[4]

US commanders, and those influencing training at all level, are simply a product of their past experiences. The simultaneous conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan have split

the US Army into vastly different combat experienced groups. The largest portions of those were involved in combat operations in Iraq with one of 15 BCTs currently, vice 2 BCTs in Afghanistan. In contrast, one can expect most US Army commanders, either in training or regular units, to have combat experience in Iraq at greater numbers than those with Afghanistan experience. The implications for the future use of *adhesion warfare* are profound. The US Army must respond to these challenges and develop effective countermeasures by aggressively studying and disseminating past and present *adhesion warfare* tactics throughout the entire force.

The US Army, during the Global War on Terrorism, is experiencing the very essence in change. The transformation of the army from a legacy force of division centric operations to the smaller BCTs is forcing the US Army to redefine how they fights wars at the operational level and below. The drive to standardize the entire US Army has led to a decrease in tactical innovation. Specifically, the US Army training and doctrine command (TRADOC) developed a standardized package to man, equip and train these forces for war; unfortunately only one model was developed to be employed in any theater, regardless of the conditions on the ground, essentially making Iraq and Afghanistan interchangeable. TRADOC's desire to implemented a "cookie cutter" approach, perfect existing US Army combat systems and standardize organizational structure has taken in limited knowledge of enemy TTPs – especially in regard to Afghanistan. The US Army must seek to understand this threat –*adhesion warfare* – and place all available resources at defeating it.

Recommendations

As recent reports from Afghanistan confirm, the Taliban continue to negate the US doctrinal stand-off firepower advantage and inflict increasingly high casualties among USACF. In defeating *adhesion warfare*, the US Army must make three key changes. First, the US Army must truly transform from an inward focused organization into an outward, enemy focused organization with the ability adapt systems and organizational structures. To accomplish this, the US Army must study and understand enemy capabilities – like *adhesion warfare* – and strategies down to the tactical level. They must identify and train to defeat the deadliest enemy capability above all other tasks by understanding our limitations against Taliban strength. This specifically requires a detailed comprehension of how firepower centric operations are not only limiting USACF maneuver ability, but causing civilian casualties.

The increased use of stand off based firepower is seen as not only a waste in ammunition resources, but as also creating increased hostility towards US forces. This reliance and overuse of firepower is directly reminiscent of similar practices in Vietnam where thousands of artillery rounds were expended to kill a single Vietcong sniper.[5] Taliban forces are adept at intermingling among the civilian population in an effort to force USACF to fire at them. When this happens, the Taliban immediately capitalize on the civilian casualties, turn the population against USACF and report to the media that US soldiers are indiscriminately targeting civilians' – just like the Soviets.[6] Drawing parallels between each "invader" is a mainstay of Taliban propaganda and adding to the growing dissatisfaction with USACF among the Afghan people.

Second, the US Army must review and adjust the doctrinal operational employment of the BCT in Afghanistan. More soldiers are needed, but more importantly, the BCT structure is not conducive to the combat typified in Afghanistan. The area of operation designated for the BCT must be reduced to accommodate for the lack of infantry, or readjust the BCT organizational structure prior to employment in Afghanistan to include more infantry. The percentage of infantry in the BCT is below 50% compared to other enablers and is doctrinally insufficient for conducting counterinsurgency operations. This recommendation will require high level US commanders to make serious changes in US Army doctrine and operational employment. The number of infantry soldiers and units clearly needs to be increased in order to outmaneuver the enemy as they fight *adhesion warfare* tactics. In addition, they must practice/train to fight and defeat the enemy with organic weapons without relying upon the doctrinal stand off based aerial and artillery firepower. US Army planners must take into consideration this when conducting / planning operations.

Lastly, and most importantly, and possible the quickest to implement, is an adjustment to the tactical training and equipping of USACF down to the individual soldier. In initial training, the US Army must remove the label of "insurgent" on the Taliban. Although this action will legitimize, in some sense, the Taliban as a credible force, it will also require the US Army to develop a set of specific operational and tactical counter measures to be employed against them. Although the Taliban are labeled an insurgent force, they were once the ruling force and posses a clear chain of command and a large number or combat formations capable of conducting battalion size operations – clearly deserving of more than an 'insurgent" label.

The practice of labeling the Taliban in this manner is reinforced from the first moments in OSUT and is specifically leading to an underestimating of the Taliban's combat abilities. The use of the "insurgent" label as the *defacto* Global War on Terrorism enemy model is ingraining in soldiers to expect a less capable fighter. Soldiers must be taught that the Taliban are as capable as any enemy faced by the US Army and that although the Taliban utilize *guerilla* tactics, they can strike in battalion size forces at any time. This minor different sets the tone to respect the enemy to a higher degree.

Additionally, *adhesion warfare* must enter the US Army lexicon as known to all USACF. Counterinsurgency is a method of combat, but is viewed as conducting "hearts and minds" operations usually involving passing out food and blankets. Soldiers receive the impression that the counterinsurgency environment is somehow less dangerous than the conventional war environment, when in actuality it is opposite. In redefining the Afghanistan as an *adhesion warfare* centric war and explaining the meaning, soldiers will understand that they are operating in the gulf between counterinsurgency and high intensity conventional war. Further study of this complex problem is highly recommended.

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[1] Sun Tzu, *The Art of War*; translated by Thomas Cleary, (Shambhala: Boston & London, 1991), 48.

[2] TRADOC G2. "Taliban Raid COP Wanat," (Washington D C: US Department of the Army, August 2008), 7.

[3] Ibid., 8.

[4] Ibid., 5.

[5] Andrew J. Birtle, *U.S. Army Counterinsurgency and Contingency Operations Doctrine 1942-1976.* (Washington, D C: Center of Military History United States Army, 2006), 381.

[6] Stephen Tanner, *Afghanistan: A Military History from Alexander the Great to the Fall of the Taliban,* (New York, NY: DA CAPO Press, 2002), 298, 299.

APPENDIX A

CRITIQUE OF USACF INDIVIDUAL TACTICAL TRAINING

This appendix is designed to give a snapshot of current US Army individual combat training ability to defeat *adhesion warfare* tactics. As detailed in the analysis, the replacement of maneuver with firepower is placing infantry forces into the field in Afghanistan against an enemy adept at negating firepower. The continual overreliance on firepower at the operational level is directly influencing the individual tactical training foundation a soldier receives starting in basic training and one station unit training (OSUT) by not emphasizing how critical close combat skills truly are. The Global War on Terrorism has demonstrated a lack of mental and physical preparation for close combat, deficient equipment (such as the M4 rifle) and a dissipating of core infantry close combat oriented skills taught in OSUT. The individual soldier has lost the edge in defeating *adhesion warfare* tactics.

Enlisted basic training and officer basic branch training is conducted at Fort Benning, Georgia as part of the US Army Infantry Center. The length of training for enlisted infantry soldiers is thirteen weeks and three days, including specialty training, which may involve mortar, anti-armor or other specialty infantry training.[1] Infantry soldiers are trained within OSUT, which is designed to create group cohesion and develop the new recruit through a series of individual and team infantry training events of varying intensity.[2] OSUT follows a prescribed timeline encompassing milestone tasks a recruit must master, recognized as vital in the development of infantryman, to proceed and complete basic training. This process has remained virtually unchanged for almost

thirty years, but recent changes in lowering the intensity of training has drawn criticism from within the army.[3]

Drill sergeants at OSUT, officers and non-commissioned officers in active units are starkly describing the current training method as softening the active force to insure more soldiers graduate and proceed to units heading to combat.[4] In a recent independent review of OSUT at Fort Benning, former infantryman and reporter Brian Mockenhaupt compiled an extensive analysis of the state of OSUT training that lacks in preparing infantryman to complete basic training and assimilate into active units preparing for combat in either Iraq or Afghanistan.[5] Although no formal US Army report exists, Mockenhaupt's report titled, "The Army We Have," indicates a serious deficiency in combat preparation of infantrymen in OSUT, especially in basic combat skills – the rigors of close combat specifically needed to defeat *adhesion warfare* tactics.[6]

During OSUT training, infantrymen are focused on a myriad of tasks designed to give them the skills to succeed on the battlefield. The training priorities include: physical fitness, close quarter battle, battle drills, various weapons qualification, operation and maintenance, vehicle operation and maintenance, land reconnaissance, map reading and navigation, minefield safety, communications equipment operation, preparing fighting positions, constructing barriers, to name the most significant.[7] When compared to countering and defeating an enemy who conducts *adhesion warfare*, many of the tasks have little relevance in counterinsurgency warfare at the rifleman level. Active unit leaders are complaining that the soldiers lack competence in the core infantry task of close combat by focusing on too many specialty tasks, essentially dissipating their preparations at killing enemy soldiers at close range.[8]

Active army leaders, profiled in Brian Mockenhaupt's report with firsthand experience, like Captain Joseph Labarbera and First Sergeant David Schumacher assigned to the 10th Mountain Division, complain OSUT is giving each soldier a broad range of skills with minimal depth in each and lacking in the physical and mental toughening required for soldiers entering combat.[9] Many soldiers graduate OSUT and report to their assigned unit within a few months from entering combat. Due to the condensed deployment timeline, new soldiers often arrive in the middle of a collective training period in the units training dominating the last time available before deploying.[10] The newly arriving soldiers, directly from OSUT, lacks the core infantry skills is seen as posing a serious cohesion challenge to units preparing for combat on a short timeframe. The problem is seen as requiring unintended additional attention from leaders, expected to continually progress the collective unit training, for training soldiers on skills they should have received in OSUT.[11] Skills the units expect new soldiers, fresh from OSUT, to know are deficient both physically and mentally.[12]

Responding to the criticism, senior OSUT commanders are quick to assert that doctrine dictates any additional training is to be accomplished at the unit level, but this rationale may be best suited for a peacetime army where soldiers have numerous training cycles with their assigned unit not actually heading to combat.[13] As experienced during the Global War on Terrorism, soldiers see very little additional training once assigned to a unit – at best about ten months before deploying into combat. Therefore it is without questions that soldiers, with lacking skills due to many different factors, are assigned to units heading to Afghanistan to face the US Armies deadliest form of combat- *adhesion warfare*.

In a standard training schedule currently used at OSUT, soldiers receive twenty hours of drill and ceremony training, twelve hours of nuclear, biological and chemical training compared to eleven hours of bayonet training, of which half is a form of competition with large padded sticks conveying little about true bayonet fighting.[14] The primary job of close combat killing is given the same amount of time to train as less needed, in the context of the Global War on Terrorism, than chemical warfare – which has not been experienced since 1918. Unit leaders express concern that the downplaying of killing is both mentally and physically under preparing soldiers.[15]

Recent experience with this problem has resulted in a change to the OSUT curriculum where commanders were given more freedom to adjust combat training to reflect what they, the commanders and drill sergeants, experienced in Iraq and Afghanistan.[16] With the greatest number of soldiers serving in Iraq what followed was an additional deemphasizing of close combat skills like squad attack, required more in Afghanistan, in favor of close quarter battle (CQB), required more in Iraq. Although this is to be expected by the sheer number of troops needed in Iraq over the smaller number for Afghanistan, but this lack of close combat preparation is proving, and has proved historically to be deadlier to soldiers regardless where they serve.[17]

Many argue that maintaining a high degree of the basics skills grounded in close combat fundamentals prepares more thoroughly soldiers not only for Iraq and Afghanistan, but to defeat *adhesion warfare* tactics in general. This shift from emphasizing the basics of close combat is proving to be deadly for soldiers facing combat in Afghanistan.

In preferring to focus solely on Iraq as the model, the core infantry skills are being degraded across the full spectrum in the very soldiers who need them the most – new infantrymen.[18]

In July 2008, to emphasize the departure from core close combat training, bayonet training was considered optional for OSUT company commanders in evaluating soldiers for graduation.[19] The OSUT company commanders were required to certify a soldier was trained on three specific tasks only; passing the army physical fitness test, qualifying with an M4 rifle and be able to perform in combat, as a member of a unit.[20] The final task was strictly based on the commander's judgment. The authority for company commanders to certify soldiers as prepared for combat is the US Army attempt to place direct responsibility at the lowest training level.

If the company commander feels the soldier is not prepared, he can restart the soldiers training or drop him from training all together.[21] However, as preferable this approach is the need for soldiers throughout the US Army and the experience of the trainers and company commander in combat raise concerns. If the company commander or drill sergeants had an uneventful combat experience, or an experience solely in an urban environment like Baghdad, the focus would, in most cases, not focus on the most dangerous type of combat any soldier is facing in the Global War on Terrorism – *adhesion warfare* tactics experienced mostly by USACF in Afghanistan.[22]

In close combat a soldier's performance will gradually deteriorate and measures must be taken to counter this.[23] If a soldier is only moderately prepared for close combat on a personal level, the soldier cannot be expected to perform it at to a high degree of effectiveness. Various methods for training close combat can be implemented, but must

be realistic. Conditioning drills only partially compensate for preparing a soldier for close combat. A staple of conditioning soldiers for combat has been in hand-to-hand combat training or combatives.

From OSUT to training at the unit, the soldier receives almost daily "combative" training consisting of the current hand-to-hand combat based on a form of Jujitsu.[24] Current combatives training seems to incorporate mix between grappling and collegiate style of wrestling, with most actions concentrated on submission holds but only limited combat killing moves.[25] Within FM 3-25.150 *US Army Combatives* only a short chapter is dedicated to knife and bayonet fighting, although the introduction to the FM quotes General George S. Patton on killing with the bayonet:

> "Very few people have ever been killed with the bayonet or saber, but the fear of having their guts explored with cold steel in the hands of battle-maddened men has won many a fight."[26]

When close combat is identified as a training task, it is more closely connected to urban close quarter battle (CQB) involving combat in the form of room and building clearing inside villages or towns.

The principals of CQB revolve around the team, or group of two to four soldiers, preparing to enter and then defeating an enemy inside a room.[27] The emphasis is on the "team" clearing the room as a whole, and only when conditions favor the clearing team entering the room is the assault executed.[28] The initiative is generally considered to be with USACF when required to conduct CQB, and the tempo is slow to maintain control, compared to close combat where the tempo is often very quick.[29] Soldiers are taught that during urban operations, the enemy will only put up a close fight inside buildings. Actual killing will occur in confined rooms, with an entire clearing team participating.

Preferably this should occur at long distances outside the room. Doctrinally, individual soldiers are not to clear a room during CQB.[30]

In addition to increased CQB training, soldiers are continually coached in advanced marksmanship. In recent years a push to train individual soldiers in extended range (between 300 and 600 meters) shooting has produced the "sniper" mentality throughout the US Army.[31] Proliferation in optics to aid in extended range killing and advanced marksmanship techniques required great amounts of time to train individual soldiers. During OSUT, the individual soldier receives more training on rifle marksmanship than any other training.[32] Considered the hallmark of the infantryman, rifle marksmanship is stressed as the essential life or death task in infantry warfare. With the addition of optics to each M4 rifle, marksmanship has become the greatest consumer of the soldier's training time in OSUT.[33]

Training each soldier in advanced extended range marksmanship enhanced the individuals lethality, but a unique set of problems are presented by relying on the current 5.56mm round to kill at extended ranges.[34] The increase in time devoted to long range marksmanship training, during a soldier's initial training, is counter to mastering basic combat skills, by stripping time needed for other critical tasks. Additionally, the M4 rifle was not designed to be a sniper type weapon.[35] Already a debated issue in the US Army, the M4 and the killing abilities of the 5.56mm round are under severe scrutiny.[36]

Without going into the extensive debate, a brief description of the main problem pertains to the design, caliber of the rifle and killing ability. The M4 rifle, short and compact, is a very good rifle for shooting on the range. The 5.56 NATO cartridge used in the M4 was designed in 1960 to be the replacement for the 7.62 M14 rifle. Vastly

unpopular during the Vietnam War, the 5.56 continually demonstrates a lack of killing or knock down power at ranges fewer than 200 meters and over 400 meters. Currently in Afghanistan, many units are reemploying the larger caliber M14 to augment the lack of killing power within the infantry platoons. Numerous reports indicate the shortcomings of the 5.56, where enemies are hit several time and continue to fight.[37] Lack of short range killing ability, with a weapon prone to malfunction like the M4 often forces US GCF to utilize captured AK 47s with their 7.62 high rate of fire excellent killing ability.

One telling example of the lack of close combat focus is in hand grenade training. OSUT soldiers are required to throw two live hand grenades from a concrete bunker revetment, never in the actual conditions present in combat. Yet, weapon systems like the Javelin anti-tank rocket are conducted as a separate training school with a professional cadre and weeks of instruction, even though the likelihood of employing a Javelin against an enemy tank is extremely unlikely. The continued focus on engaging enemy armor is pervasive throughout the Army. US Army units possess greater armor killing capability currently more than anytime is US history even though the threat is now the lowest. *Adhesion warfare* remains the greatest threat faced by US infantrymen. Often lacking the doctrinal firepower advantage, they fight an enemy proficient through years of warfare at negating firepower,

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[1] US Army Infantry Center and Fort Benning, Infantry Training Brigade, 2008 https://www.benning.army.mil/198th/cycletemplate/osuttrainingtemplate.com (accessed on August 24, 2008)

[2] Ibid.

[3] Brian Mockenhaupt, “The Army We Have,” The Atlantic http://www.theatlantic.com/doc/200706/mockenhaupt-army/ (accessed on October 5, 2008), 2-4.

[4] Ibid., 3.

[5] Ibid., 4-5.

[6] Ibid., 5-6.

[7] US Army Infantry Center and Fort Benning, Infantry Training Brigade, 2008 https://www.benning.army.mil/198th/cycletemplate/osuttrainingtemplate.com (Accessed 6 October 2008)

[8] Ibid.

[9] Mockenhaupt, (Comments of First Sergeant David Schumacher and Captian Labarera)

[10] Ibid.

[11] Ibid.

[12] Ibid.

[13] Ibid.

[14] Headquarters Department of the Army, *FM 3-25.150 (FM 21-150) Combatives*, (Washington, D C:, January 18, 2002), 7-2.

[15] Ibid.

[16] Author’s interview with CPT Tate Jarrow, Infantry training Brigade company commander on 15 July 2008.

[17] Ibid.

[18] Brian Mockenhaupt, “The Army We Have,” The Atlantic http://www.theatlantic.com/doc/200706/mockenhaupt-army/ (Accessed on 5 October 2008

[19] Author’s interview with CPT Tate Jarrow, Infantry training Brigade company commander on 15 July 2008.

[20] Ibid.

[21] Ibid.

[22] Ibid.

[23] S.L.A. Marshall, *Men Against Fire: The Problem of Battle Command in Future War,* (Alexandria, Virginia: ByrrdEnterprises, Inc., 1947), 36-41.

[24] FM 3-25.150, 7-2.

[25] Headquarters Department of the Army, FM 90-10-1 w/change 1, *An Infantryman's Guide to Combat In Built-up Areas*, (Washington, DC: May 12, 19930, 7-1, 7-8.

[26] Ibid.,7-1and1-12.

[27] Ibid., 7-25.

[28] Ibid, 7-20.

[29] Ibid., Appendix K-1.

[30] Ibid., Appendix K-1.

[31] Author's interview with CPT Tate Jarrow, Infantry training Brigade company commander on 15 July 2008

[32] Ibid.

[33] Ibid.

[34] Andrew Feicket, "The Army's M-4 Carbine: Background and Issues for Congress," CRS Report for Congress, (Washington D C: The Library of Congress, May 30, 2008), 1-3.

[35] Ibid., 4.

[36] Ibid., 4-6.

[37] Author's personal experience in Afghanistan 2005 and Ibid., 2.

APPENDIX B

THE AFGHAN WAY OF WAR (1979-2008)

On 24 December 1979, a massive Soviet invasion led by elite forces quickly secured all major Afghan cities and installed new pro-communist Democratic Republic of Afghanistan (DRA) leadership.[1] The DRA publically proclaimed the Soviet soldiers were guests of the government assisting in restoring order, however the Afghan population viewed the Soviets as just one more in a long line of invaders bent on conquering the entire country.[2] Within the first year, millions of Afghan civilians fled to neighboring Pakistan and Iran, settling in massive refugee camps along each border. Western countries viewed the Soviet action as an expansionist move to further world communism and sought to covertly support the Mujahideen forces.[3]

Immediately, the predominately Muslim Mujahideen forces began to resist the atheist Soviet and DRA forces – the war quickly took a religious overtone. This overtone became the rallying cry for the Mujahideen fighter, especially among the staunch Islamic conservative Pashtu population residing in southern Afghanistan.[4] Over the next ten years, the fighting wreaked total destruction across most of southern and eastern Afghanistan leaving over 1.3 million Afghans dead and another 5 million displaced, mostly along the Pakistan Afghan border.[5]

Soviet withdrawal came in 1989, with massive material support remaining until the final collapse of the Soviet Union. In-country fighting by the Mujahideen continued against the DRA for another two years, but the victory over the Soviet Union by the Mujahideen fighters was seen as the pivotal accomplishment; a feat of remarkable perseverance. The United States equated Afghanistan as the Soviet Union's "Vietnam."[6]

Both superpowers had experienced a decade of endless bloodletting that ended in political and military defeat. The Soviet Union's collapse, soon after the withdrawal, left little time for Soviet soldiers to reflect upon the war, limiting the pool of knowledge about the conflict. Most Soviet soldier's tactical knowledge of the Afghan Mujahideen fighter can be summed up in one word - *dukhi* or "ghosts."[7]

Mujahideen fighters came from every tribal and ethnic background of Afghanistan including many Arab Muslims from countries throughout the world. Throughout the war, no one central Mujahideen command controlled all the fighters. A grand council of the senior tribal leaders of the biggest Mujahideen contingents met several times to discuss strategic and tactical developments, but issued limited overall guidance involving coordinated efforts against Soviet troops.[8] The lack of a central command structure, however hampering Mujahideen collective operations, prevented the Soviet and DRA forces from decisively attacking a true Mujahideen strategic center of gravity.

Even at the operational level no clear center of gravity existed; the Mujahideen operated from thousands of small base camps spread throughout Afghanistan.[9] The loss of any single, or many, camps did not affect the overall Mujahideen ability to function because they were not dependant on each other; a fact the Soviet and DRA forces learned very late in the conflict. Seen by Western agents, who supported the Mujahideen, as inefficiency, the decentralized structure of the Mujahideen was in fact its greatest strength.[10]

Mujahideen commanders received support from many different Islamic support groups as well as a combination of Saudi Arabian and US contributions.[11] Normally, the

level of support would be based on the combat performance against Soviet forces. Those who carried the brunt of the fighting received the most money, supplies, and most importantly, technologically sophisticated weaponry.[12] The introduction of the Stinger missile from the United States severely restricted the Soviet use of airpower just as a change in Soviet tactics began to demonstrate success.[13]

Soviet General Boris V. Gromov, the commander of the 40th Army, returned for a third tour in Afghanistan in 1988 and expanded the use of the most successful Soviet tactics against the Mujahideen.[14] General Gromov instructed junior commanders to employ air inserted soldiers to fight the same way as the Mujahideen by being fast, unpredictable and highly mobile. Although used on a smaller scale in previous years, large scale implementation soon occurred throughout Afghanistan. This new tactic was similar to the air assault encirclement tactics used by the US Army in Vietnam. The Soviets effectively used light infantry, air mobility and all forms of firepower to decimate Mujahideen forces.

Rapidly repositioning troops, the Soviets were able to counter the Mujahideen advantage in mobility with heliborne soldiers pouncing on the unsuspecting Mujahideen fighters.[15] Although producing tangible results, the new tactics by Soviet air assault forces simply did not have enough soldiers to maintain success. The war ended before strategic success could be realized. The new tactic by the Soviet soldiers and success they achieved was, however, recognized by the Mujahideen as extremely effective.[16]

Mujahideen forces were forced to counter the three dimensional battle in the same fashion as previous US enemies in Korea and Vietnam did, and similar to previous US enemies, they countered this new threat by forcing the Soviets to fight a close war from

the moment they landed. Once Soviet forces landed, the Mujahideen would immediately cover the landing zones with fire, effectively cutting off reinforcements. Mujahideen forces would then quickly close the distance between the forces, preventing the Soviet forces from using attack aircraft for fear of hitting their own troops. Although costly, the Mujahideen forced the Soviets to wage a war of attrition. The "hugging" tactic once again forced a technologically superior force to fight without a firepower advantage. The final years of the war in Afghanistan witnessed some of the highest levels of Soviet casualties.[17] Mujahideen commanders, recognizing the higher losses they were taking, realized this was the only way to counter the Soviet aerial and firepower advantage.

Against the Soviet and DRA forces, Mujahideen fighters perfected many tactical innovations, which would become a mainstay in future Afghans conflicts. The severely restricted terrain in the mountainous regions of Afghanistan and limited road network forced the Soviets to establish numerous bases along a single road. The superior mobility of the light Mujahideen forces enabled them to effectively lay siege to these bases. Over the course of the war, Mujahideen forces conducted many siege operations by capturing many bases, but rarely attempting to hold them.[18]

The demonstrated ability to capture a base, or fort, forced the Soviets to devote increasing numbers of combat troops to static defenses. A base may be captured and immediately abandoned simply to force the Soviets to commit forces from a different area to this now threatened area.[19] The Soviets estimated over thirty-five percent of their combat power was used for static defense and convoy security needed in supplying these bases.[20] The Mujahideen understood the benefits of tying down large formations in static defense, which would otherwise be conducting combat operations against them. Those

Soviet forces that did venture out would be attacked by the favored Mujahideen tactic - the close combat ambush.

Long the preferred tactic of guerilla type fighters, the ambush was ideal in most of the restricted Afghan terrain. Initially, Mujahideen ambushes were normally from long range in multiple locations.[21] The Mujahideen ambushers soon realized that Soviet forces would call for aircraft to bomb their initial firing positions. The Mujahideen countered this threat by designating a force to initiate fire, and then break contact before aircraft could arrive. Once the strike aircraft delivered their bombs onto vacated Mujahideen positions, the second Mujahideen force would continue the attack from a different direction. The Soviet forces had great difficulty in pinpointing Mujahideen positions with any great accuracy.[22] This demonstrated to the Mujahideen fighters a common operational pattern by the Soviet, and later US, forces; the arrival of strike aircraft was predictable and expected by the ground forces.

Attempts to Counter the Mujahideen

Differing convoy systems were employed by the Soviet forces. Heavier armor and aerial security was incorporated into the Soviet convoys with limited success.[23] The lack of available infantry to support the convoy usually meant the Soviets would simply run the gantlet and not pursue the attackers, because much of the Soviet infantry were guarding remote bases and not actively operating against the Mujahideen.[24] One side effect from relegating the infantry to simple guard was a decrease in their tactical abilities. As the war progressed, Soviet infantry displayed a lack of field skills, most notable in operating at night.[25] This bears much in common with the experience of US forces during the final years of the Vietnam War.

Renowned for their night fighting abilities during the Second World War, the Soviet infantry in Afghanistan digressed into a siege mentality.[26] The Mujahideen exploited the Soviet aversion to night operations by increasing night attacks against Soviet bases and forts. Even during offensive combat operations, Soviet forces normally stopped at night – permitting the Mujahideen fighters to evacuate their wounded and conduct resupply.[27] Mujahideen fighters sought to harass and interdict Soviet forces throughout the night, providing a psychological edge against the sleep deprived Soviets.[28] Mujahideen fighters also utilized the darkness to close with Soviet positions where, at first light, they would be often within or close to the Soviet positions.[29]

In frustration at their inability to find and defeat Mujahideen fighters, Soviet and DRA forces increasingly retaliated against civilian targets in a vain attempt to destroy the Mujahideen base of support.[30] The destruction of whole villages, entire fields of crops and poisoning of water sources resulted in massive loss of life, but did little to limit the Mujahideen attacks. Many Mujahideen leaders at the time, to include Mullah Omar, current leader of the Taliban, viewed the suffering of the people as *Inshallah*, or the "will of Allah."[31] The Taliban, many of whom fought as Mujahideen, witnessed how privation by the population was essential, and unavoidable, in achieving victory against the Soviets. This hard-line, quasi religious view would be carried over to the war against the United States.

The Rise of the Taliban

In 1994, to stem the lawlessness engulfing Afghanistan after the final defeat of the DRA, the Taliban were seen as a reasonable alternative to the continuing warlord struggles that had destroyed the country. The Taliban were assisted in gaining power by

the Pakistan Inter Service Intelligence agency (ISI), the Pakistan version of the CIA - but with broader powers.[32] Pakistan sought to open a road for commerce to the West, and by backing the Taliban with arms and technical assistance through the ISI, enabled them to defeat or subjugate most warlords from Herat to Kabul and conquer over 75% of the country by 1996.[33] What followed, unexpected by Pakistan, was the imposition of a severe Islamic state with little regard for Pakistan's wishes.

The Taliban imposed *Sharia*, which placed women back in the home, closed school to girls, forced men to grow beards, banned music and photographs to name a few.[34] The Taliban achieved a level of peace throughout most of Afghanistan while continuing to battle Ahmed Shah Masoud's Northern Alliance forces, composed of Tajik, Hazarra, Uzbek and some non-Taliban Pashtu fighters, who continued to hold out in northern Afghanistan.[35] The Taliban drew their most support from the dominate tribe in Afghanistan, the Pashtu.

During the Soviet – Afghan War, the Pashtu had the highest percentage rate, with hundreds of thousands displaced and seeking refuge inside Pakistan and Iran.[36] Within Pakistan, the predominately Pashtu established a religious school system, or madrassas. The madrassas sought to train young boys, mostly orphans from the war, in the ways of the Koran as a method of limited social inclusion. This would be the young boy's only formal education, severely restricting their view of the outside world.[37] The Taliban armies' backbone would be made from these madrassas graduates.

Over the years, thousands of boys attended madrassas, creating an entire generation of war influenced, worldly inept young men and boys indoctrinated with religious fervor married to Taliban ideology. These Taliban students grew up completely

segregated from women, with little knowledge of the outside world and tutored under the strict oversight of mullahs who taught them to memorize the Koran.[38] Filled with religious conviction, borderline brain washing and educated in Mujahideen tactics used against the Soviets, the Taliban fielded a potent force of young fighters backed by an experienced former Mujahideen cadre.

The young Taliban are taught that dying in a jihad guarantees 70 maidens / virgins in the afterlife.[39] In battle, the young Taliban fighters display reckless regard for their personal safety, demonstrating their conviction. Although they possessed only rudimentary tactical skills as soldiers, they made up for what they lacked militarily by displaying suicidal courage and conviction when in combat.[40] The initial Taliban casualties taken during 2001 US attack were quickly replaced with thousands of enthusiastic young madrassas graduates, eager to participate in the new *jihad*.[41] As the war enters its seventh year, the Taliban manpower resources are still well stocked and motivated.

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[1] Stephen Tanner, *Afghanistan; A Military History from Alexander the Great to the Fall of the Taliban,* (New York, NY: DA CAPO Press, 2002), 235.

[2] Ibid., 237.

[3] Steve Coll, *Ghost Wars: The Secret History of the CIA, Afghanistan, and Bin Laden, from the Soviet Invasion to September 10, 2001,* (New York: The Penguin Group, 2004), 50-52.

[4] Ibid., 61-62.

[5] Lester W. Grau and Ali Ahmad Jalali, *The Other Side of the Mountain: Mujahideen Tactics in the Soviet-Afghan War* (Quantico, Virginia: The United States Marine Corps studies and Analysis Division, 1995), xviii.

[6] Robert F. Baumann, *Russian-Soviet Unconventional Wars in the Causcasus, Central Asia, and Afghanistan,* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Combat Studies Institute, 1993), 215-217.

[7] Tanner, 256.

[8] Ibid., 259.

[9] Ibid., 256.

[10] Coll, 57.

[11] Ibid., 67.

[12] Ibid.,119-121.

[13] Baumann, 155.

[14] Grau and Jalali, 80,105.

[15] Baumann, 142-143.

[16] Ibid., 142,158.

[17] Ibid., 148.

[18] Grau and Jalali, 209.

[19] Ibid., 220.

[20] Baumann, 150.

[21] Grau and Jalali, 209.

[22] Baumann, 155.

[23] Lester W. Grau, *The Bear Went Over the Mountain: Soviet Combat Tactics in Afghanistan,* (Washington D C: National Defense University Press, 1993), 135,139,149-150.

[24] Baumann, 150.

[25] Grau, 201-203.

[26] Grau and Jalali, 297-304.

[27] Ibid., 314.

[28] Ibid., 314 and Author's personal interview in August 2005 with former Mujihideen commander and ANP Colonel Qadar Jon.

[29] Grau and Jalali, 312-314.

[30] Tanner, 261.

[31] Ahmid Rashid, *Taliban: Militant Islam, Oil and Fundamentalism in Central Asia*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 70-74.

[32] Coll, 292-294.

[33] Rashid, 33-40.

[34] Ibid., 4, 114-116.

[35] Ibid., 2-6, 13, 14.

[36] Tanner, 225.

[37] Rashid, 32-25.

[38] Ibid., 33-36.

[39] Ibid., 33-40.

[40] Ibid., 35.

[41] Ibid., 87

ANNEX A

GLOBAL WAR ON TERRORISM CASUALTIES

GLOBAL WAR ON TERRORISM
BY REASON
October 7, 2001 Through August 2, 2008

CASUALTY REASON	OEF HOSTILE DEATHS	OEF NON-HOSTILE DEATHS	OEF HOSTILE WIA	OIF HOSTILE DEATHS	OIF NON-HOSTILE DEATHS	OIF HOSTILE WIA	TOTALS
MEDICAL, CANCER		1			6		7
MEDICAL, HEART RELATED		9		1	43	1	54
MEDICAL, OTHER						3	3
MEDICAL, OTHER MEDICAL		1					1
MEDICAL, RESPIRATORY FAILURE		1		3	13		17
MEDICAL, STROKE		1			7		8
OTHER, BURNS/SMOKE INHALATION	1		6	17	7	85	116
OTHER, DEHYDRATION						2	2
OTHER, DROWNING		5		15	42		62
OTHER, DRUG AND/OR ALCOHOL OVERDOSE		1			13		14
OTHER, ELECTROCUTION				2	14	19	35
OTHER, EXPOSURE TO ELEMENTS						1	1
OTHER, FALL/JUMP	2	4	2	2	7	33	50
OTHER, FRACTURE OR BROKEN BONE			2			24	26
OTHER, LACERATION			4			79	83
OTHER, LOSS OF LIMB(S)	1		1	1		3	6
OTHER, MILITARY EXERCISE					1	1	2
OTHER, PARACHUTE ACCIDENT						8	8
OTHER, PHYSICAL TRAINING -- MILITARY RELATED		1			2		3
OTHER, STAB WOUNDS			2		1	1	4
TRANSPORTATION, AIRCRAFT CRASH -- CREW (MC)	26	89	14	93	107	42	371
TRANSPORTATION, AUTOMOBILE ACCIDENT (PRIVATE)					2		2
TRANSPORTATION, PEDESTRIAN						2	2
TRANSPORTATION, VEHICLE CRASH (MC)	2	33	1	18	214	96	364
WEAPONRY, ARTILLERY/MORTAR/ROCKET	8		73	198	4	2,589	2,872
WEAPONRY, EXPLOSIVE DEVICE	153	12	1,112	2,129	17	20,850	24,273
WEAPONRY, GRENADE	1					70	71
WEAPONRY, GUNSHOT	115	30	594	667	186	2,435	4,027
WEAPONRY, NUCLEAR, CHEMICAL OR BIOLOGICAL AGENTS						21	21
WEAPONRY, OTHER						4	4
WEAPONRY, ROCKET PROPELLED GRENADE	8		124	45		579	756
NOT REPORTED/UNKNOWN/MISCELLANEOUS	37	19	374	163	82	3,542	4,217
TOTALS	354	207	2,309	3,354	768	30,490	37,482

OEF=OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM; OIF=OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM
WIA=WOUNDED IN ACTION
MC= MILITARY CONTROL
DATA ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE

Prepared by: Defense Manpower Data Cente
Data, Analysis and Programs Division

Author's note: This chart depicts displays that in Afghanistan, listed under *Operation Enduring Freedom* (OEF), the ratio between gunshot related casualties are much higher proportionally than in Iraq, listed under *Operation Iraqi Freedom* (OIF).

Source: CRS Report RS22452. *United States Military Casualty Statistics: Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom*

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